

■ AN INTRODUCTION TO PERT . . . OR . . .

D.E. Yoes

Now that we've all finally agreed on where we want to go, how we can arrange to get there from here.

Suppose you wake up on Saturday morning and decide to take the family on a picnic. Going through your head is a jumble of activities and tasks that need doing in order to get the picnic organized. "Coffee. Is the thermos clean? Remember this time to take some fly-spray. Do we have any beer? What kind of sandwiches would everyone like?"

How to accomplish all the preparations? Obviously, you need the help of the rest of the family. But if everybody is involved in the task, how will it be coordinated? How to avoid two people getting the napkins and nobody remembering to get the first-aid kit? How to assign responsibility for the can-opener? And how to decide what must be done first and what can be done at any time?

These kinds of questions *could* all be answered by one person, who would assign tasks and maintain supervision, settle disputes and respond to the inevitable complaints about work-loads, tasks neglected, and so forth.

Or there could be a non-directed kind of process in which the family periodically stops what it is doing to argue about everything from where to go on the picnic to which kind of olives to take.

PERT: A BETTER PLANNING METHOD

There is a planning method that permits a group to accomplish the following things:

- Be mutually aware of the process and subgoals.
- Contribute to and share in the decisions made about how, when and by whom activities are to be done.
- Make more efficient use of resources by concentrating effort and time on the critical tasks rather devoting time to subtasks while tasks of greater priority lack hands.
- Reevaluate the project while it is underway, and reallocate resources to cope with unexpected blocks to task accomplishment, or to take advantage of unanticipated success in meeting some subgoal.

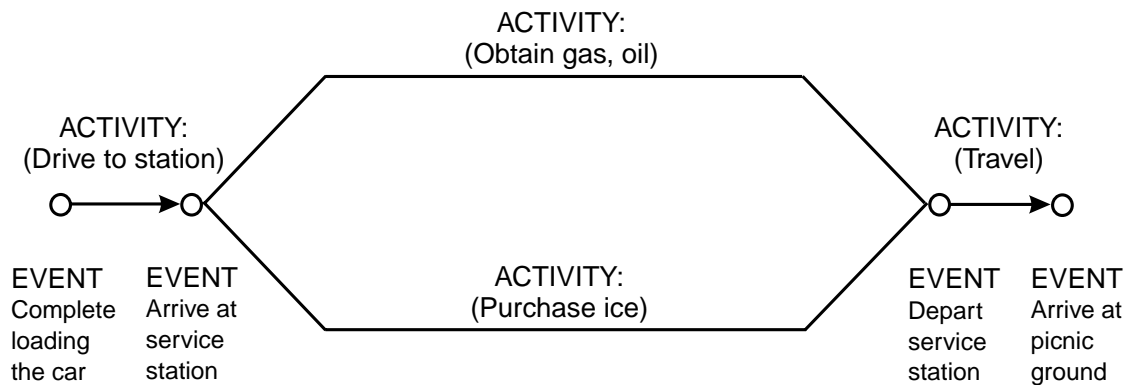
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This planning method is called PERT, one of those acronyms to be sure, but no less valuable for that. It stands for Program Evaluation and Review Technique, and it has saved government and industry many millions of person-hours and dollars. A variation of PERT is known as CPM, or the Critical Path Method, a name that expresses something about how the thing is done. In this brief paper, we can only glimpse the bare outlines of PERT/CPM. Please consult the references for more detailed discussions.

Group Analysis and Flow Charting

PERT is a group analysis and flow-charting procedure that begins with identifying the sequences of dependent activities. The process begins, in true Lewis Carroll fashion, at the end: Before we can arrive at the picnic grounds, we must travel there in the car. Before we can travel in the car, we must fill the tank with gas and check the oil. Before we can do that, we must have traveled to the service station. Before we can start out for the service station, we must have loaded all the supplies in the car...except ice, which we can get at the gas station.

So we draw a network of *activities*, each of which ends in an *event*, in this manner:



Just to keep it from looking as trivial as you probably think it is, we have shown the purchase of ice as a parallel activity, beginning and ending in the same events as the obtaining of gas and oil.

Now, suppose that you know that you need to arrive at the picnic ground no later than 11:00 a.m. When will you need to start from home?

Just like the radio or television producer, you now must *back-time* each activity. Estimate its duration as well as you can, and label each activity:

- Travel to the picnic ground: 60 minutes.
- Obtain gas and oil: 10 minutes.
- Purchase ice: 15 minutes. (You must also open the ice chest and pack the food and drinks.)
- Drive to the service station: 10 minutes.

Add up the sequence of activities that will take the most time. You discover that you don't need to add the time required for putting gas in the car; obtaining the ice will require five more minutes than getting gas.

You have determined that purchasing ice is on the critical path and putting gas in the car is not.

Adjusting the Critical Path

You have also discovered that it will take you an hour and twenty-five minutes to reach the picnic ground. If you must arrive there at 11:00 a.m., you must leave no later than 9:35 a.m.

What if you cannot leave by then? You must shorten the time required to accomplish one or several of the activities in the critical path or else revise your plans drastically.

At this point, your oldest boy suggests that the time required to purchase ice could be shortened if he opened the ice chest and partially unpacked the food while his younger brother got the ice bag out of the freezer and their little sister paid the attendant for the ice.

This did not come from you as a command or directive. It came from one of the other planners in response to a perceived need to increase the efficiency of some activity leading to a common goal. And while there may be some squabbling among the children about which child gets to pay the attendant and which gets to carry the ice, there is no caviling at the division of tasks or the necessity for all to share.

Moreover, every party to the enterprise has a means of evaluating how well the timetable is being met and of revising the group performance to meet needs that arise unexpectedly. Each is able to contribute not merely his or her labor, but the knowledge of the special task he or she individually performs as it relates to the overall effort.

As boss of the family, you might have been able to come up with the idea of dividing up the task of purchasing the ice . . . or you might not. And if you had thought of it, the family members might not have performed it as ably under your directive as they might had it been their own idea.

PERT as a Communication Tool

The example given here is thus seen to be trivial, indeed, but at the same time a paradigm of the planning process.

PERT is seen to be a tool of communication, and not just an abstract exercise performed only by staff planners and thereafter executed under duress by grumbling line members.

PERT is a method that permits revision of the plan when things don't work out the way the original plan said they should.

Plans never work out right. But *the planning process is indispensable.*

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■ KURT LEWIN'S "FORCE-FIELD ANALYSIS"

Morris S. Spier

Change in a group or an organization means essentially an alteration in the way things get done in the system. It may mean changes in compensation methods, sales and production levels, leadership styles, or interpersonal functioning, among others. Kurt Lewin's Force-Field Analysis provides a framework for problem solving and for implementing planned change efforts around a wide range of group and organizational issues. By way of reviewing Lewin's concepts, this paper describes how a group of managers applied the method when they met to discuss their effectiveness as a work team.

In talking to one another, the group members soon recognized that their day-to-day effectiveness and their ability to improve it were hampered by the degree to which they felt constrained in confronting one another on relevant task and interpersonal issues. Having agreed that they needed to talk more openly with each other, each individual member now waited for someone else to "be open." Much of the frustration with this technique was soon summarized in the question "Why can't we change the way we work together?"

DEFINITION OF THE PROBLEM

At first the reason for "no change" seemed to be "that's just the way things are," but as the managers looked more deeply at the climate in which they were operating, they identified some factors or pressures that strongly supported changes in the direction of more openness: (a) the team members wanted to perform effectively for the sake of their own careers as well as the good of the organization; (b) they were functionally interdependent and had to work together to accomplish their goals; (c) there were existing work-related problems that were having an impact on effectiveness (for example, responsibility without authority and unclear job definitions); and (d) some interpersonal tension already existed in the system (for example, destructive competition and passive and overt hostility).

As they continued their analysis, the managers also identified pressures that acted as powerful obstacles to change: (a) many of the group members lacked experience and skills in dealing with conflict and more open feedback; (b) the risk of the "unknown" was high in terms of "What will we open up?" and "Will we hurt one another?"; (c) there was a concern that if certain issues were brought up "things could get worse"; and (d) there were questions about whether top management would support a more open

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climate or whether they would respond with “That’s not the way things are done around here.” In defining the problem, it was recognized that opposing forces like these in the environment determined the existing level of interpersonal functioning in the group.

Figure 1 summarizes this “diagnosis” of the problem. The top and bottom of the figure represent opposite ends of the continuum of a team’s interpersonal climate. The environmental conditions and pressures supportive of more openness in the system are the driving forces represented by the arrows pushing upward. At the same time, these forces act as barriers to the forces pushing the team backward toward a more closed system. The arrows pushing downward represent the restraining forces that are keeping the system from moving toward a higher degree of openness; at the same time, they are also driving forces pushing the group toward a climate of lower interpersonal risk.

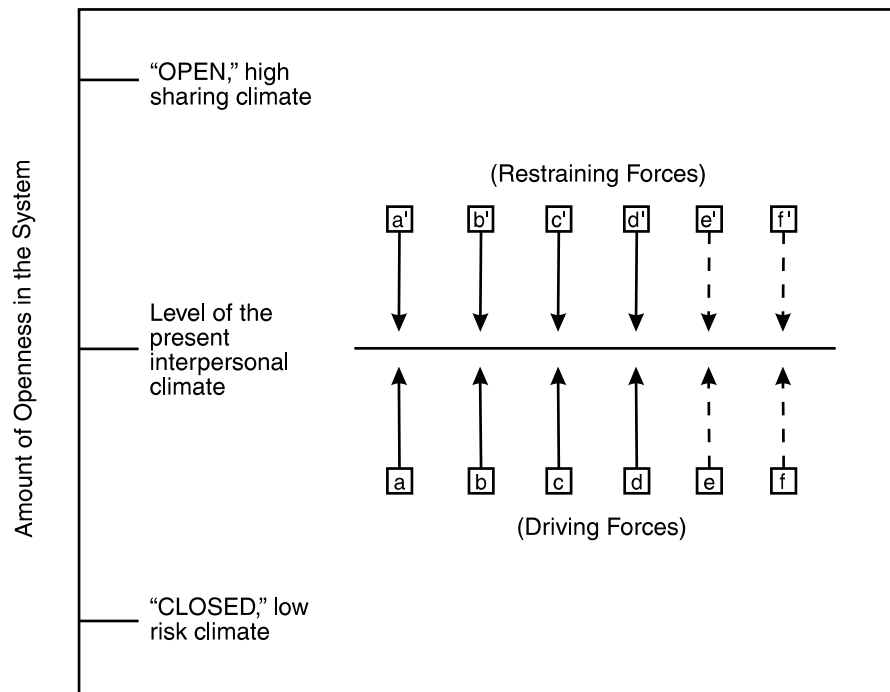


Figure 1. The Force Field

What Is a Force Field?

A group of forces such as that shown in Figure 1 may be called a “force field.” The length of the arrows in the force field shows the relative strength of the forces: The longer the arrow the stronger the force. For descriptive purposes, the forces in Figure 1 are shown as equal in strength, but a force field can be made up of forces of varying strengths. Indeed, the strength of any single force may itself vary as we get closer to either end of the continuum of openness. A group or organization stabilizes its behavior where the forces pushing for change are equal to the forces resisting change. Lewin called the result of this dynamic balance of forces the “quasi-stationary equilibrium.” In our example, the equilibrium is represented in Figure 1 by the line marked “level of the

present interpersonal climate.” At this level of functioning, the system is not completely “closed” in its ability to engage in open sharing, feedback, and risk taking, but neither does it enjoy the level of these elements needed for the system to work together most effectively. The arrows meeting at the line indicate that the current state is being maintained by a balance of discernable driving and restraining forces somewhere between the end points on the continuum of team functioning.

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CHANGE

Since the management team is interacting at its present level because of a balance of organizational and individual needs and forces, change will occur only if the forces are modified so that the system can move to and stabilize itself at a different level where the driving and restraining forces are again balanced. The equilibrium can be changed in the direction of more openness by (1) strengthening or adding forces in the direction of change, (2) reducing or removing some of the restraining forces, or (3) changing the direction of the forces.

Any of the basic strategies may change the level of the team’s functioning, but the secondary effects will differ depending on the method used. If a change in the equilibrium is brought about only by strengthening or adding driving forces, the new level may be accomplished with a relatively high degree of tension, which itself may reduce effectiveness. In Figure 1, the line representing the level of the present interpersonal climate will move upward toward more openness under the pressure of strengthened driving forces. The additional pressures upward, however, will be met by corresponding increases in resistance. The resulting increase of tension in the system will be characterized by a lengthening of the arrows pushing upward and downward at the new level.

Attempts to induce change by removing or diminishing opposing forces will generally result in a lower degree of tension. An important restraining force that requires removal in our example is the managers’ lack of experience and skills in dealing with conflict. As the managers acquire new interpersonal skills, a key restraining force will be removed. Moreover, changes accomplished by overcoming counterforces are likely to be more stable than changes induced by additional or stronger driving forces. Restraining forces that have been removed will not push for a return to old behaviors and ways of doing things. If changes come about only through the strengthening of driving forces, the forces that support the new level must be stable.

For example, many work groups are stimulated toward new ways of working together by participating in team-building sessions, only to find former behaviors and habits reemerging shortly after group members’ return to the day-to-day job. If change is to continue, some other driving force must be ready to take the place of the enthusiasm engendered by the team-building session.

One of the most efficient ways to accomplish change is to alter the direction of one of the forces. If the managers in our example can be persuaded to “test” top

management's support for a more open climate, they might find more encouragement than they previously thought existed. Thus, the removal of a powerful restraining force (expected top management disapproval) could become an additional, strong driving force (actual top management support) in the direction of change.

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■ FIVE COMPONENTS CONTRIBUTING TO EFFECTIVE INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS

Myron R. Chartier

Five interpersonal components offer clear distinctions between good communicators and poor communicators. These components are Self-Concept, Listening, Clarity of Expression, Coping with Angry Feelings, and Self-Disclosure.

SELF-CONCEPT

The most important single factor affecting people's communication with others is their self-concept—how they see themselves and their situations. While situations may change from moment to moment or place to place, people's beliefs about themselves are always determining factors in their communicative behavior. The self is the star in every act of communication.

Individuals have literally thousands of concepts about themselves: who they are, what they stand for, where they live, what they do and do not do, what they value, what they believe. These self-perceptions vary in clarity, precision, and importance from person to person.

Importance of the Self-Concept

A person's self-concept is who he is. It is the center of his universe, his frame of reference, his personal reality, his special vantage point. It is a screen through which he sees, hears, evaluates and understands everything else. It is his own filter on the world around him.

A Weak Self-Concept

A person's self-concept affects her way of communicating with others. A strong self-concept is necessary for healthy and satisfying interaction. A weak self-concept, on the other hand, often distorts the individual's perception of how others see her, generating feelings of insecurity in relating to other people.

A person with a poor view of himself may have difficulty in conversing with others, admitting that he is wrong, expressing his feelings, accepting constructive criticism from others, or voicing ideas different from those of other people. In his insecurity he is afraid that others may not like him if he disagrees with them.

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Because she feels unworthy, inadequate, and inferior, she lacks confidence and thinks that her ideas are uninteresting to others and not worth communicating. She may become seclusive and guarded in her communication, negating her own ideas.

Forming the Self-Concept

Even as a person's self-concept affects his ability to communicate, so his communication with others shapes his self-concept. As man is primarily a social animal, he derives his most crucial concepts of self from his experiences with other human beings.

Individuals learn who they are from the ways they are treated by the important people in their lives—sometimes called “significant others.” From verbal and nonverbal communication with these significant others, individuals learn whether they are liked or not liked, acceptable or unacceptable, worthy of respect or disdain, successes or failures. If individuals are to have strong self-concepts, they need love, respect, and acceptance from significant others in their lives.

Self-concept, then, is a critical factor in a person's ability to be an effective communicator with others. In essence, an individual's self-concept is shaped by those who have loved—or not loved—him or her.

LISTENING

Most communication education has focused on skills of self-expression and persuasion; until quite recently, little attention has been paid to listening. This overemphasis on the skills of expression has led most people to underemphasize the importance of listening in their daily communication activities. However, each person needs information that can be acquired only through the process of listening.

Listening, of course, is much more intricate and complicated than the physical process of hearing. Hearing is done with the ears, while listening is an intellectual and emotional process that integrates physical, emotional, and intellectual inputs in a search for meaning and understanding. Effective listening occurs when the listener discerns and understands the sender's meaning: The goal of communication is achieved.

The “Third Ear”

Reik (1972) refers to the process of effective listening as “listening with the third ear.” An effective listener listens not only to words but to the meanings behind the words. A listener's third ear, Reik says, hears what is said between sentences and without words, what is expressed soundlessly, what the speaker feels and thinks.

Clearly, effective listening is not a passive process. It plays an active role in communication. The effective listener interacts with the speaker in developing meaning and reaching understanding.

Several principles can aid in increasing essential listening skills.

1. The listener should have a *reason* or *purpose* for listening.
2. It is important for the listener to *suspend judgment* initially.
3. The listener should *resist distractions*—noises, views, people—and focus on the speaker.
4. The listener should *wait before responding* to the speaker. Too prompt a response reduces listening effectiveness.
5. The listener should *repeat verbatim* what the speaker says.
6. The listener should rephrase *in his or her own words* the content and feeling of what the speaker says, to the speaker’s satisfaction.
7. The listener should *seek the important themes* of what the speaker says, by listening through the words for the real meaning.
8. The listener should use the time differential between the rate of speech (100 to 150 words per minute) and the rate of thought (400 to 500 words per minute) to *reflect* upon content and to *search* for meaning.
9. The listener should be *ready to respond* to the speaker’s comments.

CLARITY OF EXPRESSION

Effective listening is a necessary and neglected skill in communication, but many people find it equally difficult to say what they mean or to express what they feel. They often simply assume that the other person understands what they mean, even if they are careless or unclear in their speech. They seem to think that people should be able to read one another’s minds: “If it is clear to me, it must be clear to you, also.” This assumption is one of the most difficult barriers to successful human communication.

A “Longer” Board

Satir (1972) tells of a family ruckus that occurred when the father sent his son to the lumber yard for a “longer” board. The child thought he knew what his father wanted and dutifully went to the lumber yard, but the “longer” board he brought back was still three feet too short. His father became angry and accused the boy of being stupid and not listening. The father had simply assumed that since he knew what he meant by “longer,” his son would also know. He had not bothered to make himself clear or to check his meaning with his son.

The poor communicator leaves the listener to guess what is meant, while he or she operates on the assumption that he or she is, in fact, communicating. The listener, in turn, proceeds on the basis of what he or she guesses. Mutual misunderstanding is an obvious result.

To arrive at planned goals or outcomes—from accomplishing the mundane work of everyday life to enjoying the deepest communion with another person—people need to have a means for completing their communication satisfactorily.

An Effective Communicator

A person who can communicate her meaning effectively to others has a clear picture in her mind of what she is trying to express. At the same time she can clarify and elaborate what she says. She is receptive to the feedback that she gets and uses it to further guide her efforts at communication.

COPING WITH ANGRY FEELINGS

A person's inability to deal with feelings of anger frequently results in communication breakdowns.

Suppression

Some people handle their anger by suppressing it, fearing that the other person would respond in kind. Such people tend to think that communicating an unfavorable emotional reaction will be divisive. They may become upset even when others merely disagree with them.

I may, for example, keep my irritation at you inside myself, and each time you do whatever it is that irritates me, my stomach keeps score . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 6 . . . 8 . . . until one day the doctor pronounces that I have a bleeding ulcer, or until one day you do the same thing that you have always done and my secret hatred of you erupts in one great emotional avalanche.

You, of course, will not understand. You will feel that this kind of over-charged reaction is totally unjustified. You will react angrily to my buried hostility. Such a failure to cope with anger can end in homicide.

Expression

Expression of emotions is important to building good relationships with others. People need to express their feelings in such a manner that they influence, affirm, reshape, and change themselves and others. They need to learn to express angry feelings constructively rather than destructively.

The following guidelines can be helpful:

1. *Be aware* of your emotions.
2. *Admit* your emotions. Do not ignore or deny them.
3. *Own* your emotions. Accept responsibility for what you do.
4. *Investigate* your emotions. Do not seek for a means of rebuttal to win an argument.
5. *Report* your emotions. Congruent communication means an accurate match between what you are saying and what you are experiencing.

6. *Integrate* your emotions with your intellect and your will. Allow yourself to learn and grow as a person.

Emotions cannot be repressed. They should be identified, observed, reported, and integrated. Then people can instinctively make the necessary adjustments in the light of their own ideas of growth. They can change and move on with life.

SELF-DISCLOSURE

Sidney Jourard, author of *The Transparent Self* (1971b) and *Self-Disclosure* (1971a), says that self-disclosure—the ability to talk truthfully and fully about oneself—is necessary to effective communication. Jourard contends that an individual cannot really communicate with another person or get to know that person unless he or she can engage in self-disclosure.

Indeed, this is a mutual process. The more I know about you, and the more you know about me, the more effective and efficient our communication will be.

A person's ability to engage in self-revelation is a symptom of a healthy personality. Powell (1969) puts it this way:

I have to be free and able to say my thoughts to you, to tell you about my judgments and values, to expose to you my fears and frustrations, to admit to you my failures and shames, to share my triumphs, before I can really be sure what it is that I am and can become. I must be able to tell you who I am before I can know who I am. And I must know who I am before I can act truly, that is, in accordance with my true self. [p. 44]

It can be argued that an individual will understand only as much of himself as he has been willing to communicate to another person.

Blocks to Self-Revelation

To know themselves and to have satisfying interpersonal relationships, people must reveal themselves to others. Yet self-revelation is blocked by many. Consider the following example (Powell, 1969, p. 12):

Powell: "I am writing a booklet to be called *Why Am I Afraid to Tell Who I Am?*"

Other: "Do you want an answer to that question?"

Powell: "That is the purpose of the booklet, to answer the question."

Other: "But do you want my answer?"

Powell: "Yes, of course I do."

Other: "I am afraid to tell you who I am, because if I tell who I am, you may not like who I am, and it's all that I have."

This conversation from real life reflects the fears and doubts that many people have—that they are not totally acceptable to others, that parts of themselves are unlovable, that they are unworthy. Cautious, ritualized communication behavior is the result.

Dynamics of Trust

The dynamics of fear can be exchanged for the dynamics of trust. No one is likely to be willing to engage in much self-disclosure in a threatening situation. Self-disclosure can be done only in an atmosphere of good will. Sometimes it takes one person's risk of self-disclosure to stimulate good will in other people. Trust begets trust; self-disclosure generates self-disclosure. The effective communicator is one who can create a climate of trust in which mutual self-disclosure can occur.

Being an effective communicator, then, is based on these five basic components: an adequate self-concept; the ability to be a good listener; the skill of expressing one's thoughts and ideas clearly; being able to cope with emotions, such as anger, in a functional manner; and the willingness to disclose oneself to others.

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■ APPLIED GROUP PROBLEM SOLVING: THE NOMINAL GROUP TECHNIQUE

David L. Ford, Jr., and Paul M. Nemiroff

Much has been written recently about the need for more effective communication and problem-solving processes in organizations. Indeed, there has long been a recognition that creative solutions to complex problems will increasingly involve group processes. Unfortunately, the modification or facilitation of group decision-making processes designed for use in qualitative problem exploration has been inadequately explored.

Considerable small-group theory and research has been concerned with the group decision process as a mediating variable. It affects other group variables such as (a) the frequency of participation, (b) the quality of interaction, (c) the assets or liabilities stemming from interaction, and (d) the nature of the intention (Van de Ven & Delbecq, 1971).

NOMINAL GROUP TECHNIQUE (NGT)

One useful technique for group problem-solving is known as the nominal group technique (NGT). This approach was developed by Andre Delbecq and Andrew Van de Ven in the late 1960s at the University of Wisconsin. It is used to enhance the generation, exploration, and communication of ideas relevant to program planning and problem-solving situations. Early applications reported by Delbecq and Van de Ven emphasized the use of the technique for assessing priorities in programs requiring cooperation by two or more groups (Delbecq & Van de Ven, 1971). They also viewed it as a research vehicle for pilot exploration in health-care planning situations (Van de Ven & Delbecq, 1972). Other recent uses of NGT have been to identify communication problems in organizations (Huseman, 1972) and to enhance overall communication effectiveness in organizations (Green & Pietri, 1973).

Unlike typical interacting groups, in which all communication among members takes place with minimal structuring or control, the nominal group is one in which individuals work in the presence of others but do not interact verbally except at specified times. Written output is generated by each participant and is sequentially shared and listed on newsprint for all members to see. NGT is, then, a structured meeting that attempts to provide an orderly mechanism for obtaining qualitative information from groups who are familiar with a particular problem area.

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RELATIONSHIP OF GROUP PROCESS TO PROBLEM SOLVING

The processes that occur in a problem-solving group have several important and practical implications for the effectiveness of the group.

1. The processes affect the flow of communication and interaction among group members.
2. This flow, in turn, affects the participants' attitudes, which can help or hinder the implementation of the group's decisions: A requisite of good implementation is high acceptance.
3. Most importantly, the processes that occur in a decision-making group can directly affect both the rationality and quality of the final group product.

A number of studies have been conducted in the past fifteen years, comparing the effectiveness of individuals vs. groups and brainstorming vs. interacting groups in generating ideas. Results have shown that brainstorming groups generate more ideas than an equal number of individuals brainstorming independently. Brainstorming groups also have been shown to be superior to conventional discussion groups in problem-solving situations (Osborn, 1957; Taylor, Berry, & Block, 1958).

The NGT, a variation of the brainstorming technique, has been compared with conventional interacting groups on three measures of effectiveness: (1) the number of unique ideas, (2) the total number of ideas, and (3) the quality of the ideas produced. For all three measures, nominal groups have been found to be significantly superior to brainstorming groups in generating information relative to the problem (Bouchard & Hare, 1970; Dunette, Campbell, & Jaosted, 1963).

Other researchers concur that when the group task is to generate ideas and information on a problem, interacting groups inhibit creative thinking. Brainstorming techniques attempt to eliminate interpersonal criticism but often do not prevent interacting groups from being inhibited, thus contributing to a decrease in the quality (in terms of originality and practicality) of ideas generated (Collaros & Anderson, 1961).

DESCRIPTION OF THE NOMINAL GROUP PROCESS

Although the apparent benefits of the NGT might suggest that it is quite complex, the process is a simple, but carefully structured, series of steps. A typical nominal group process includes the procedure briefly summarized below.

Pre-NG Meeting Details

Prior to the nominal group meeting, the facilitator selects those individuals who may have expertise, experience, and perceptions directly related to the problem area to be explored. He presents to this "target group" an overview of the problem or program objectives and explains that the members' role is to contribute to the definition of the problem. Next, the facilitator subdivides the target group into nominal groups of five to

eight persons. Each group assembles around a small table. Group recorders are appointed for later portions of the task.

Silent Generation of Ideas

The facilitator presents each group with the exploratory question, to which each participant is asked to respond in order to define the critical elements of the problem. Without discussion, each member spends approximately fifteen minutes (silently and independently) writing as many facts and resources needed to deal with the question as possible.

Round-Robin Listing

This phase is one in which each group member, in turn, presents one of his or her ideas to be listed verbatim by the group recorder on newsprint. This process continues, without discussion, until all ideas have been listed.

Discussion

The group recorder leads the group in a discussion of the recorded ideas for the purpose of clarification, elaboration, and evaluation. Each item is discussed sequentially and no items are eliminated from the list.

Ranking

Each participant, without interacting with others, is asked to select the ten most important items on the total list and rank them in order of priority. A group decision is made, based on the outcome of members' individual votes. A variant of this last phase could include preliminary voting, followed by discussion on the preliminary vote, and then a final secret vote by the participants.

DISADVANTAGES OF PROBLEM-SOLVING GROUPS

The nominal group process circumvents many of the inhibitory influences that plague interacting problem-solving groups and, consequently, limit group effectiveness. These liabilities seem to be the result of a variety of factors (Maier, 1967), including the following.

1. *Individual domination*: Dominant personality types unduly influence the group.
2. *Social pressure for conformity*: Majority opinions tend to be accepted, even if their objective quality has not been assessed.
3. *Status incongruities*: Low-status members are overly influenced by high-status members and, as a result, frequently acquiesce.
4. A "*self-weighing*" effect: An individual's feeling of self-competence determines the amount of his participation. (It should be noted that none of these first four

factors is related to problem-solving ability. The “best” resource in the group—with respect to problem-solving ability—may not have the ability to influence the group’s performance.)

5. “*Premature closure*”: Interacting groups tend to converge quickly on a decision without considering all the available or relevant information.

Facilitative Aspects of the NGT

In facilitating the identification of a larger number of problem-related dimensions, the nominal group process prompts creative decision making.

During the first stage of the nominal process (silent generation of ideas in writing), members have time for uninterrupted thought. By allowing members to think and to record their ideas first, without interacting with others, the inhibitory factors of conformity pressures, polarization on a few ideas, status incongruities, and premature closure are immediately avoided. The nominal process also allows for the positive effects of “social facilitation” that may occur when one is working in the presence of others.

During the next stage of the nominal process (round-robin listing of ideas on newsprint), an opportunity is provided for all members to influence the group’s decision. Because all ideas are revealed in writing, minority opinions and ideas are represented and conflicting ideas are tolerated. Again, the problems of individual domination and social conformity—which can hinder interacting group functioning—are alleviated. This listing of items also provides visual and aural concentration on ideas. Since many interacting groups deluge members with more ideas than they can handle or remember, this second stage of the nominal process is very useful.

The third stage (discussion of ideas) and the last stage (ranking) of the process provide clarification of items and give each idea a hearing.

By encouraging an attitude of “problem mindedness” in group members as opposed to “solution mindedness” (the latter being characteristic of conventional interacting groups), the nominal process improves group decision making and problem solving. Further, the round-robin process facilitates self-disclosure of ideas—even by reticent members. In the conventional interacting group, in which a critical group atmosphere may exist, such members may hesitate to raise their ideas.

It should be noted, however, that a critical atmosphere can be both functional and dysfunctional, depending on the context of the situation. In the process of finalizing and evaluating the group’s solution, a critical atmosphere can prompt members to reject inferior ideas and synthesize more useful ones, thus upgrading the final product of the decision-making procedure. On the other hand, in such an atmosphere, a good idea may be rejected before it is fully explained or understood.

SITUATION DETERMINANTS

One issue concerning the NGT that needs to be further explored is the efficacy of the process under varying conditions. While Green and Pietri (1973) have suggested a homogeneous composition for interacting groups, Hoffman (1959) has found heterogeneous interacting groups to be superior in terms of acceptance and quality of ideas generated. One detrimental effect of the heterogeneous group is the likelihood of interpersonal conflict. If this conflict can be managed creatively, there may be merit in using the heterogeneous group for problem-solving purposes.

Also of interest is the question of group tradition or life span. Decision-making committees can be either *ad hoc* (those formed on the spur of the moment or for specific short-term tasks, whose members have had little or no previous interaction with each other) or *established* (composed of members who have worked together for some time and know one another's strengths and weaknesses). It would be interesting to know if the nominal group technique could function as a "leveler" in diminishing any differences that might exist among group members.

CONCLUSION

The truth of the adage "two heads are better than one" obviously depends on the situation. The nominal group technique has definite advantages over conventional face-to-face groups: It appears to mitigate inhibitory factors and thus to facilitate group functioning.

However, while the NGT appears to be especially functional for fact-finding or idea-generating tasks, the interacting group seems to be superior for sharing and evaluating information (Dunette, 1964; Maier & Hoffman, 1960). Van de Ven and Delbecq (1971) have suggested an approach that incorporates the best of both worlds by combining aspects of NGT with those of interacting groups, for creative and effective problem solving.

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■ WISHES AND FEARS

Anthony G. Banet, Jr.

In the life of most personal growth groups there comes a time of impasse, freezing, getting stuck. The impasse can be manifested in various ways: unproductive silence, rediscussion of old material, garbled communication, premature closure. Group members, including the facilitator, may experience tension and frustration, simultaneously wishing that something would happen and dreading that it will.

CONFLICT OF FORCES

Whitaker and Lieberman (1967) discuss this impasse, this conflict of driving and restraining forces, in terms of wishes and fears shared by all group members. They postulate a group focal conflict in which disturbing motives (wishes) are matched by reactive motives (fears), thereby producing immobility.

Group Solutions

To deal with the conflict, the group chooses between a restrictive solution, which attempts to decrease the fear, and an enabling solution, which attempts to decrease the fear while simultaneously allowing some satisfaction of the wish. Group process is viewed as a slowly emerging resolution of the group's focal conflicts, first in terms of restrictive solutions, and then gradually in terms of enabling solutions.

WISHES VS. FEARS

Early in group life, members have a number of wishes—their hopes and expectations in attending the group. They wish to learn, to talk about themselves, to gain insights and new perspectives; they may want to be the best member or to gain approval from the leader; or they may feel sexual impulses or angry reactions toward the leader or other group members.

These wishes are matched by fears: the fear of looking foolish or stupid; the fear of rejection or retaliation; the fear of losing control, destroying the group, or incurring the leader's wrath.

Group process is viewed as the unfolding of conflicts between motives, solutions to those conflicts, and the emergence of new disturbing and reactive motives, as shown in Figure 1. For example, a disturbing motive interacts with a reactive motive and results in

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a restrictive solution. Because, at the beginning of the group process, members are usually much more in touch with their fears than their wishes, the solution of the dilemma is most frequently a restrictive one: keeping silent, withdrawing, holding back. Restrictive solutions work only for a short time; soon the dilemma emerges again, as a new disturbing motive. This new disturbing motive again interacts with another reactive motive.

Eventually, the group will risk an enabling solution as a result of conflict between a disturbing motive and a reactive motive. When it does so, it will discover that there is sufficient safety both to satisfy wishes and to reduce fears. As it becomes accustomed to the power of an enabling solution, the group learns to risk this type of solution instead of a restrictive solution. In this process, it moves to a new phase of constructive change and growth.

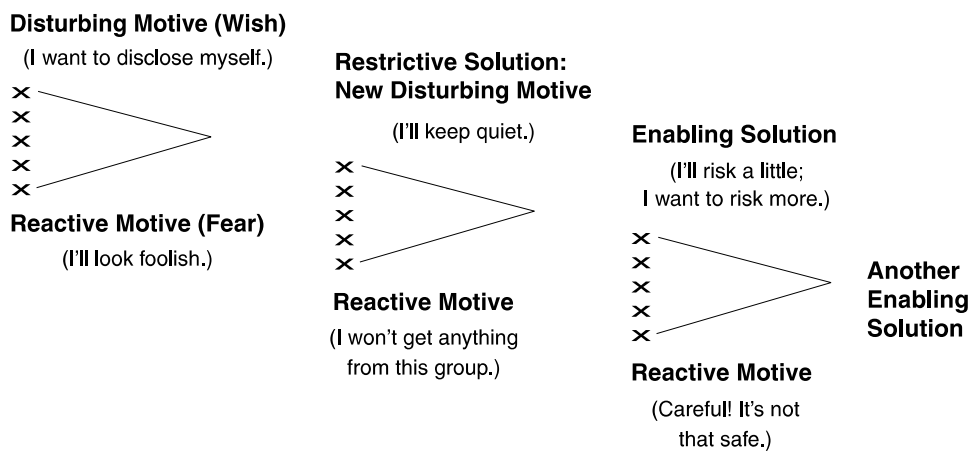


Figure 1. Conflict and Solution: Group Process

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■ UTILIZING HUMAN RESOURCES: INDIVIDUAL VERSUS GROUP APPROACHES TO PROBLEM SOLVING AND DECISION MAKING

John J. Sherwood and Florence M. Hoylman

A well-known joke belittling the effectiveness of groups says, “The camel is a horse designed by a committee.” This statement reflects the attitude that groups often fail to use common sense in accomplishing their tasks. Nevertheless, from corporate boards of directors to fraternity membership committees, groups are used for problem solving and decision making by almost all organizations. Although the use of groups is frequent and the dissatisfaction with the products of group efforts is widespread, managers often lack clear and explicit criteria by which to decide when to assign a problem to a group and when to assign it to an individual. A straightforward set of criteria is needed for determining whether a group or an individual is likely to produce better results on a given task. If a task is referred to a group, some guidelines on how to manage the group for the most effective outcomes are useful.

WHEN TO CHOOSE A GROUP AND WHEN TO CHOOSE AN INDIVIDUAL

There are five factors to consider when deciding whether to assign a particular task to an individual or to a group of people for joint consideration: (1) the nature of the task itself; (2) how important the acceptance of the decision or the commitment to the solution is to the implementation of the solution; (3) the value placed on the quality of the decision; (4) the competency and investment of each person involved and the role each person plays in implementing the decision; and, finally, (5) the anticipated operating effectiveness of the group, especially its leadership.

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Nature of the Task

It is the nature of the task itself that is the first and most important criterion in determining whether a problem would best be solved by a group or by an individual. Certain types of tasks such as creative or independent tasks, are best performed by individuals; other types of tasks that involve integrative functions or goal setting are particularly appropriate for groups.

Creative Tasks

Research reveals that individuals working separately are more creative and effective as generators of ideas and as problem solvers than as individuals working together in groups (except the brainstorming group—a collection of individuals following an established procedure—which can generate more ideas than individuals working alone). When the task calls for a creative solution, that is, a new alternative or a heretofore unconsidered option, an individual is a better choice than a group. For example, individuals do better than groups at creating or constructing an original crossword puzzle, designing a technical component, or writing a computer program. When seeking a creative outcome, one would do better to find an expert in the area, rather than to assemble a number of people.

Convergent or Integrative Tasks

When the problem requires that various bits of information be brought together to produce a solution, such as developing a business strategy, evaluating a new product, or solving a crossword puzzle, groups can offer superior outcomes. The *proviso* is, of course, that the group of people is capable of working together effectively.

Independent Tasks

Sometimes an eagerness to establish more teamwork results in individuals whose jobs are for the most part independent of one another being encouraged to work as a team. When interaction with others is required to get one's job done—because of the flow of the work process, the necessity to share information or skills, or other forms of task interdependency—working together frequently or occasionally as a group may be very useful. One way, however, to assure *unsatisfactory* work-group meetings is to insist that people whose jobs are for the most part independent of one another work together as a team. Effective managers understand which of their subordinates need to work together to get their jobs done and which do not.

Goal Setting

The lesson of management by objectives (MBO) is that people should be involved in determining the goals that are designed to guide their behavior and against which they

are to be evaluated. When goal setting is done in relevant groupings of managers and subordinates, more commitment to individual objectives can be expected.

Importance of the Commitment to the Solution or the Acceptance of the Decision

Research has shown that when people participate in the process of reaching a decision, they have more commitment to that decision—that is, they feel more ownership over the outcome. Therefore, they are likely to have more interest in it and to make more energy available for its implementation.

On the other hand, when an individual solves a problem or makes a decision, two tasks still remain. First, others must be persuaded that the particular outcome is the best or at least is desirable. Second, others must agree to act on this decision or to carry it out. It is clear that if participation in the decision-making process increases ownership of the outcome, problems of surveillance, monitoring, and follow-up are reduced.

Not all solutions to problems are dependent on the support of other people for effective implementation. Therefore, a manager must be aware which issues require the commitment of others and convene those people who are critical to a solution's effective implementation. Clearly, all decisions do not need to be made by group action.

Importance of the Quality of the Decision

The best managers know the trade-offs involved when they choose between a decision that has greater acceptance and commitment but is of lower quality and a decision that may be more difficult to implement but is of higher quality.

If a manager is sufficiently concerned with distributing responsibility so that a solution will be carried out completely and with dispatch, he or she may accept a solution of somewhat lower quality because it has widespread acceptance, rather than insisting on a solution of somewhat higher quality that is unacceptable to those on whom the manager is dependent for its implementation. In some cases, a manager may be willing to make an unpopular decision or to assign the solving of a problem to an individual expert, knowing that these solutions require additional resources to be invested in their implementation. The manager needs to weigh the importance of the quality of the decision.

The quality of a group product, in contrast to one produced by an individual expert in the field, varies depending on the competencies of group members, the information available to them, and their effectiveness in working together as a group.

Characteristics of Individual Group Members

There are three clear guidelines to use in assembling a group of people to address an issue: (a) the expertise each individual brings to the particular problem under consideration; (b) the stake each party has in the outcome; and (c) the role each person is likely to play in implementing any decision, that is, how dependent others will be on

each individual's support of the group's solution. It is obvious from these three factors that managers probably will not wish to convene the same collection of individuals to address every issue.

Operating Effectiveness of the Group

A question that deserves special consideration is how effectively the individual members of a group will be able to work together to produce a solution of merit. This question needs to be raised each time a new group is assembled. If the members will have great difficulty in working effectively as a group, it may be better to refer the decision to an individual. In considering the operating effectiveness of the group, the skills of the leader of the group are particularly important, because the leader can do more than any other person both to enhance and to block the effectiveness of group efforts.

MANAGING A GROUP EFFECTIVELY

Groups have a great deal to offer; that is, they have particular assets. On the other hand, groups often fail to meet expectations for performance; that is, they also have *liabilities*. To use groups effectively, one must understand both these aspects.

Assets of Groups

Greater Knowledge and Information

Even when one person (e.g., the supervisor or a technical expert) knows much more than anyone else, the limited and unique information of others can fill important gaps. There is simply more information, experience, and competencies in a group than in any one of its members. The issue, therefore, becomes how to make this expanded pool of knowledge available and how to utilize it effectively.

Greater Variety of Approaches

Each person brings a somewhat different perspective to a problem, and these different ways of viewing the world can open avenues of consideration outside the awareness of any single individual. In addition, individuals can get into ruts in their thinking or into patterned ways of defining problems and approaching issues. Assembling a number of people expands the potential ways a particular problem can be approached.

Increased Acceptance

When individuals have an active part in the decision-making process, their ownership of the outcome is increased. The responsibility people feel for making the solution work is thereby enhanced. As mentioned earlier, when an individual solves a problem, two

additional problems remain—persuading others both to accept the solution and to carry it out.

Reduced Communication Problems

The implementation of a decision is likely to be smoother and require less surveillance when people know the goals and obstacles, the alternatives that were considered but rejected, and the facts, opinions, and projections associated with making the decision.

Liabilities of Groups

It is clear that a group has more firepower than an individual and an assembly of people has an expanded potential for new perspectives and integrative solutions. Yet five or ten capable individuals can meet together to solve a problem or to make a decision and leave the meeting frustrated, with little progress or with outcomes that are acceptable to only a few of the principals. The following are obstacles to effective group functioning.

Social Pressures to Conform

Sometimes majorities or powerful minorities (or the boss) pressure people to go along with a lower quality decision. In their desire to be good group members or to be accepted, people sometimes keep their disagreements to themselves (or voice them only to close associates after a meeting).

Quick Convergence

In a group there is frequently a tendency to seize quickly on a solution that seems to have support. The apparent acceptance of an idea can overshadow appropriate concerns for quality or accuracy. Agreement often is erroneously assumed to signal the correct or the best solution. Ideas of higher quality that are introduced late in a discussion may have little chance of real consideration. Research has shown that when groups are required to produce two solutions to every problem, the second solution is frequently of better quality.

A Dominant Individual

Sometimes one person may prevail because of status, activity level, verbal skills, or stubborn persistence—all of which may be unrelated to competence in the particular task facing the group. Since a leader is particularly likely to dominate a discussion, his or her skills and insights into the consequences of excessive control are especially important.

Secondary Goals or Hidden Agendas

Often individuals work simultaneously on the assigned task and on their own needs (usually covertly). Their hidden agendas may include personal pride, protection of their

own position or department, desires for visibility or acceptance, or personality conflicts with others who are present. Some of these factors lead to attempts to “win the decision” rather than to find the best solution; other factors lead to moves for prominence or to deference.

Time Constraints

Available time may restrict the group’s potential. It simply takes more time for a group to make a decision than it does for a single individual. It also takes a good deal of time for a group to develop the skills and procedures required for effective work—that is, to capitalize on the assets mentioned earlier and to limit the liabilities inherent in any group effort.

Problems with Disagreement

Issues are often sharpened, and therefore clarified, when there are differences or conflicts among members of a group in defining the problem, gaining preferred solutions, obtaining information, or establishing perspectives. However, disagreement affects people differently, and hard feelings between individuals may block the group’s progress. Some people experience disagreement as a cue to attack; others react to conflict and controversy by freezing or withdrawing.

When disagreement is well managed, new ideas and innovative solutions are often the outcomes. When differences between people are seen as sources of new information rather than as obstacles to be overcome, solutions tend to be more creative.

Premature Discussion of Solutions

Confusion and conflict occasionally arise over proposed solutions because there is insufficient agreement or clarity concerning the problem. Unwittingly, group members offer different solutions to solve different problems. Both the quality and the acceptance of solutions increase when the seeking of solutions is delayed until both goals and potential obstacles are identified.

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

Identifying and mobilizing the resources of a group and overcoming the obstacles to effective group functioning are keys to the group’s success. The quality of a group’s decision depends on whether the people with the best ideas or those with the worst ideas are more influential. The declaration “Let’s get all the facts on the table and then make a decision” is a naive wish, as the liabilities of groups indicate. Getting all relevant information on the table and assuring that it receives an appropriate hearing is a very difficult task. Once the decision has been made to assign a job to a group of people, the behavior of the group’s leader becomes critical to its success. Again, it is important to

realize that the leader can do more than anyone else to facilitate or to block effective group functioning.

In problem-solving groups, effective leadership promotes the utilization of all members as relevant resources and ensures open and accurate communication among them. It is important, therefore, to understand the *leadership dilemma*: the more power a leader has, the more positive contributions he or she can make to a group's functioning and procedures, but also the more the leader's own behavior can be a barrier to the free exchange of ideas. The best solutions come with a *strong* leader working with *strong* group members. In this situation, conflict and disagreement tend to be creative. All resources have the opportunity to be fully utilized when (1) there is two-way initiative between the leader and other group members (not simply two-way communication, but two-way initiative); and (2) responsibilities for leadership activities are shared; provided (3) that the strength of subordinates coupled with their assumption of responsibilities for leadership functions do not threaten the boss.

There are several things required from members of a problem-solving group in which leadership is conceived as a set of *functions* to be performed by anyone seeing the need, rather than as a *role* to be filled by the boss. The more that each of these requirements of effective leadership is shared and performed by all members of a problem-solving group, the more productive and creative that group is likely to be. These functions include encouraging broad participation by bringing others into the discussion and by protecting minority points of view; assuming responsibility for accurate communications between other group members; summarizing progress by pointing out where things stand at the moment; and questioning the appropriateness or the order of agenda items.

The leader can do more than anyone else to create an unintentional "camel" as the group's product and to provoke the attitude that all people who have worked in groups have experienced: "If I can only get through this meeting, then I can get some work done!" On the other hand, the leader can also do more than anyone else to provide the conditions for effective group efforts. Some guidelines for when groups are a good choice and some insights into making those groups function effectively are especially helpful in the day-to-day life of a manager.

■ FINISHING UNFINISHED BUSINESS: CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING

Francis L. Ulschak

From our first breath to our last, problem solving is what life is all about. The resolution of each new problem leads to new opportunities (new problems). A key part of life is having tools to deal creatively with problems encountered each day. A general, person-centered definition of a problem is simply the existence of a gap between where a person is and where that person would like to be. If a person says he or she has a problem, then he or she has a problem regardless of whether others experience it as a problem.

Problems of Different Degrees

Not all problems, however, are of the same intensity. Problems may be classified as first-degree, second-degree, and third-degree problems. A first-degree problem involves finding a “better idea approach.” The present way of doing something is working well but more options are desired to determine if it might be done even more effectively. For example, a manager or a facilitator explores new methods and techniques to see if he or she can increase his or her effectiveness.

A second-degree problem occurs when something is definitely not right; the present way of addressing the situation is ineffective. For example, work-group efforts or team-building group sessions keep dissolving into hostility and confusion. The problem does not allow the option of leisurely developing alternatives; response to a specific concern is needed.

A third-degree problem is a survival issue. Instead of something being “not right,” the situation becomes an either/or—either an effective response to the problem is developed or the program will not survive. For example, management says that either the manager/facilitator solves the problem in thirty days or he will not have a job.

Whether a problem is experienced on the first-, second-, or third-degree level is important to problem solving and to people’s openness to solutions. The stress related to problem solving will increase as the problem moves from a first- to a third-degree problem.

In terms of problem solving, “good” problems have two characteristics. First, there are possible solutions, and, second, the person experiencing the problem has a way of

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knowing when the problem is solved. If these two characteristics are present, the problem has a good chance of resolution.

The Multiplier Effect

Problems do not solve themselves—people solve problems. This assumption is contrary to the misconception that if ignored or denied long enough, a problem will vanish. Ten-year-old Joe might ignore the build-up of garbage outside the back door. But instead of going away, the garbage becomes deeper the longer it is ignored; instead of one sack of garbage, Joe will end up dealing with several sacks of overflowing garbage. What at one time was a simple trip to the garbage can now ends up being a major hauling job followed by a clean-up campaign from the house to the garbage can. This pile-up of garbage is an example of the *multiplier effect*. When problems are not dealt with effectively, they pile up and multiply. If a person's behavior in response to the initial problem resolves the problem, there is closure with that problem and the individual's energies are freed to respond creatively to new problems in new settings. If, however, the problem is not successfully dealt with, its unresolved parts carry over to the next problem encountered. Problem-solving energies then become divided between the new problem and the resolution of the former problem. The pile-up of unresolved problems results in feelings of frustration and helplessness—"this is bigger than all of us"; "there is nothing that can be done." The end product of nonproblem-solving behavior is that the individual loses his or her potency to deal with the world in creative ways.

This article attempts to provide (a) a general understanding of creativity and the way problem solving is blocked and facilitated in individuals and groups and (b) specific creative problem-solving tools. The methods, Syn 1 and Syn 2, are presented in a detailed outline of the creative problem-solving process. These methods have been used by the author with groups of Ph.D.'s and with people who have only fourth-grade educations; with racially mixed groups; with groups of young and old individuals. The scope of problems worked with has ranged from personal problems (how to speak in a group without sounding backward) to institutional problems (how to raise \$30,000 for a referral center). Although the process has been effectively used with technical nonpeople problems (how to develop a circular saw blade that will cut wood but not flesh), the majority of the author's experience has been with people-oriented problems. And, while the methods discussed here may be used by individuals, the primary focus is the group.

Throughout this discussion the terms *leader*, *client*, and *participant* are used. In a creative problem-solving session, those terms have a special meaning. The leader of a creative problem-solving session is the one who takes responsibility for the general flow of the session. This person is the servant of the group; i.e., the leader is not in the group to push his or her ideas, but rather to facilitate the solution of the problem. A major task of the leader is to be aware of the group's level of discounting and to make the necessary interventions when discounting occurs. He or she has the task of protecting the participants in the group so that defensive/offensive behavior by participants is not

needed. The leader might be compared to the conductor of an orchestra, who sets the pace and mood of the music and whose efforts facilitate the harmonious working together of the various sections of the orchestra so that the end result is pleasing to the members and the audience. So, too, the problem-solving group leader attempts to create a spirit of cooperation among the participants with the end result being a win-win feeling for all involved.

The *client* is the person who designates the problem to be solved, stating the problem in his or her own words in a “how to . . .” formula. The client forms the purpose of the group because the group is working *for* the client and the resolution of the client’s problem. In formalized groups, the client pays the participants for their time, or the client has a contract to work with other members of the group on their problems: “I will work with you and your problem and you will work with me and my problem.” Finally it is important to note that the client is the individual who owns responsibility for the problem. “We” problems rarely get solved.

Participants in this process are those who work for the client. In the analogy of the orchestra, they are the members of the orchestra working harmoniously together. There is a great deal of aggressiveness on the part of the participants, which is turned against the problem to be solved. Participants build on one another’s ideas, keeping a balance between the ownership of ideas and the corporate use of ideas. Several streams of thought come together in this approach. The concepts of “closure” and “finishing unfinished business” are a constant, recurring theme. The significance of finishing unfinished business is very much a part of Gestalt therapy. Polster and Polster (1973) discuss the concept of unfinished business and how all experience stays with an individual until that person is finished with it. While all of us carry around all kinds of unfinished business, closure (or saying good-bye) is crucial in order to allow us to experience the present. This is especially significant when the unfinished business is central to our lives. Concepts from transactional analysis are also a strong influence: ego states, stroking, and discounting are significant at various points. More information on specific topics is available in the bibliography.

One caution: there is no free lunch. No problem-solving method will provide a finished solution in a neatly wrapped package. Problem-solving processes provide the generation of ideas, options, and directions. Then the person with the problem must apply the ideas. The author’s basic bias toward problem solving is optimism; i.e., problems can be solved. Realism, however, also dictates that some problems are simply not solvable for a particular person or group at a particular time. If a problem defies solution, it may need to be redefined as how to live with the unresolvable problem.

CREATIVITY: ILLOGICAL LOGIC

Important to creative problem solving is a consideration of what creativity means: How is it developed or fostered? Are all people creative in equal amounts?

Three resources have been very important in shaping the view of creativity presented here: (1) Prince (1970, 1975) and Gordon (1961, 1973, 1974) in their work with Synectics¹ over the past many years; (2) DeBono (1971, 1972) and his work with lateral thinking; and (3) Watzlawick, Weakland, and Fisch (1974) and their views on first- and second-order change.

Prince and Gordon

Prince (1970, 1975) and Gordon (1961, 1973, 1974) have had a profound impact on the ideas in this article; indeed, the essence of the processes discussed is from their work.

Prince views effective thinking as a combination of precise thinking and creative thinking. Precise thinking involves high levels of rightness, logic, certainty, etc. Creative thinking involves approximations, uncertainty, and even “wrongness.” Creative thinking is a necessary ingredient when there are no immediate solutions to a problem. Analogies are one powerful aid to creative thinking.

DeBono

The “father” of lateral thinking, DeBono (1971, 1972), defines two types of thinking systems—vertical and lateral. Vertical thinking involves logic, right and wrong answers, and a yes/no system; things are “either/or.” Lateral thinking is based on a “PO” system instead, meaning that an idea is temporarily put on hold. No judgments are made about the idea; rather, it is looked at from various perspectives. Lateral thinking is an attempt to move “sideways” to obtain a new perspective on a problem.

Watzlawick, Weakland, and Fisch

In a book entitled *Change* (1974), Watzlawick, Weakland, and Fisch delineated two approaches to change: first-order change and second-order change. First-order change occurs when the individual engages in “trying harder.” Instead of taking a step back to survey the situation, the individual intensifies an already futile effort, e.g., the insomniac who tries harder and harder to fall asleep. Second-order change involves changing the system itself. Instead of trying harder, the individual approaches the problem from a totally different (and bizarre!) direction, e.g., the insomniac who says, “I will not fall asleep. I will stay awake...” Moving from first to second-order change involves the “gentle art of reframing”; i.e., a new frame of reference is selected to view the problem.

Assumptions About Creative Thinking

Some of the assumptions about creative thinking on which this paper is based are the following.

¹ Portions of the following material are abridged and adapted from Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in *The Practice of Creativity* by George M. Prince. Copyright © 1970 by George M. Prince. By permission of HarperCollins Publishers Inc.

1. *Creative thinking is a state of mind or an attitude that has an interest and investment in exploring ideas.* It involves breaking with a standard approach and seeing a problem from different perspectives. Creativity happens in an environment in which speculations and approximations are invited. For the creative child, a broom handle becomes a horse on which he or she rides into the sunset and the cardboard box an entry in the Indy 500.
2. *All individuals possess creativity.* The question is not whether or not we have it, but how we facilitate or hinder our own and other people's creative potential. Some individuals are constantly in touch with their creative abilities; others, rarely.
3. *Specific techniques and tools are available that facilitate the use of creative capabilities.* Each of the major resources mentioned previously suggests particular techniques: for Prince and Gordon, analogies and excursions; for DeBono, PO₁, PO₂, PO₃; for *Change*, reframing. The implication is that people may be trained to broaden their creative abilities.
4. *Creativity is not necessarily an explosion of something totally new.* Rather, a creative effort may involve simply pulling together old materials in different ways. Creativity may be viewing an event from a different perspective, thus allowing for different responses.

HOW NOT TO GET ON WITH IT: NONPROBLEM-SOLVING BEHAVIOR

Before problem-solving behavior can be attempted, there must be an awareness of behaviors that block the solving of problems. If we wanted to concentrate on disrupting creative problem solving, the one major recommendation would be to keep discounting² at a high level. To discount, according to Webster, is to reduce quality, cost, or value. Discounting can occur in a problem-solving group in several ways. The effect of all of them is to reduce the value of both ideas and people. In essence, discounting is a process of laying blame rather than problem solving.

Discounting of Self/Other

Discounting of self occurs when a person feels that he or she is not O.K. or that his or her ideas are not O.K. Therefore, the person devalues his or her ideas and, consequently, participation. Some tipoffs to self-discounting are "I can't" (there are very few things a person *cannot* do and many things that a person *will not* do); "I don't care"; "It's impossible for me to think"; "Nobody can do anything to change things here." In one team-building group, for example, an individual expressed a concern that the other group members did not value his ideas. As the videotape was played, it became obvious that the individual was making suggestions and then laughing at his own ideas. He was discounting his own ideas and the result was that the group also discounted them.

² Discounting is a concept from transactional analysis. For more information see Schiff (1971, 1975).

Discounting of others is saying to the other person that he or she or his or her ideas are not O.K. “Other” discounting happens in two ways. It may be very direct: “You’re stupid”; “That will never work”; “Be practical”; “Be realistic”; “The manager never does anything right”; etc. There are countless ways that a person or an idea can be “shot down.” A second form of this type of discounting is a subtle denial of the other’s ability to handle a problem. This amounts to paternalism by saying, “Here, let me (us) do it for you,” with the hidden (or not so hidden) implication that the other person is not capable of doing it himself or herself. The other’s ability to handle the situation effectively is discounted. In a problem-solving group, this discounting may be expressed in statements such as “It is bigger than all of us” or “Have you considered . . .” or “Don’t concern yourself about it” or “That is a good idea, but . . .” or “What you are really saying is . . .”

Discounting of the Problem

A second type of discounting is discounting of the problem. Typical of this type is the statement “But we have no problems here.” In problem-solving sessions, this is one of the most difficult types of discounting to deal with, because as long as the person denies the existence of a problem, nothing will be done to solve that problem. Also, a problem stated by one person may be discounted by another person saying “But that should be no problem,” thus discounting the significance of the problem.

One of the important aspects of the process outlined here is that at the very beginning, participants are asked to state what problem they would like to work with. In this way, they designate the problem for themselves. It is important to create an atmosphere in which it is permissible to have problems and to resolve them.

Discounting the Solvability of the Problem

A third way of discounting is to discount the solvability of the problem—an excellent method of frustration. Whenever solutions are suggested, an individual shoots them down because he or she does not consciously or preconsciously believe that the problem can be solved: “There is nothing we can do, anyway”; “The problem is too complex.” If the leader does *not* hear the client say “I do not think the problem can be solved” and does not confront the client, the group will be frustrated because the client will still be saying “My problem cannot be solved” while the group and the leader are concentrating on a solution. There are possible solutions, but the person presenting the problem, who has a vested interest in not solving the problem, is unwilling to acknowledge them.

Discounting the Context of the Problem

Another form of discounting is the discounting of the context of the problem: the context in which the problem is occurring is not attended to. For example, a drinking problem in the setting of an Indian reservation may be quite different from that in a white suburban community. Taking the context of the problem into account is a significant aspect of problem solving.

Passive Behavior

In problem-solving sessions, passive behavior³ is defined as any behavior that does not serve to resolve a problem. It varies in form from situation to situation. At one point, it may involve a great deal of motion and movement on the part of an individual (like a racing automobile engine with the clutch disengaged). Another form of passive behavior occurs when a person states a problem and then sits back waiting for someone else to solve it: “Fix it for me.” Still another form of passive behavior in this context is violence. The individual indulges in emotional release but the problem is still there to be resolved. A final form of passive behavior is adaptive behavior: an individual decides to please the leader and the other members of the group at the expense of solving a problem. Instead of asking “How can I solve this problem?,” the person’s energies are directed toward the question “How can I be pleasing to the other people in the group?” At the end of a problem-solving session, the passive individual may say “I am satisfied, my problem is resolved,” but the problem may still be there. Passive behavior takes many forms, but the end result is predictable: problems do not get solved.

Parent, Adult, Child Concepts

Another way of understanding nonproblem-solving behavior is through the Parent, Adult, and Child concepts of transactional analysis.⁴ All of us have a Parent, an Adult, and a Child way of understanding ourselves and others. These three ways of understanding are called ego states. The standard diagram for the three ego states is presented in Figure 1.

The *Parent ego state* contains the behaviors and attitudes that a person has incorporated from his or her parents (or parent substitutes): values, prejudices, rituals, etc. One way to become aware of the Parent ego state is to list the adjectives that come to mind when one thinks of real-life parents. It will quickly be apparent that the Parent ego state is composed of two parts—a Nurturing Parent and a Critical Parent.

To become aware of the *Adult ego state*, one can list the adjectives that come to mind when one thinks of adults. The Adult ego state collects information; it is the reality-tester part of a person. The Adult may respond critically and analytically to incoming data (find the weak points) and/or the Adult may respond to the strong points in the data and seek ways to strengthen the weak points.

To become aware of the *Child ego state*, a list of adjectives describing children can be used. Again, two parts of the Child ego state emerge: a Free Child, which is natural and spontaneous (and creative), and an Adapted Child, which is compliant or rebellious. The Adapted Child is responding to the perceived presence of a parent, either external or internal.

³ See Schiff (1971, 1975).

⁴ Thanks to Ralph Meyers, who first exposed the author to the use of PAC in nonproblem-solving behavior.

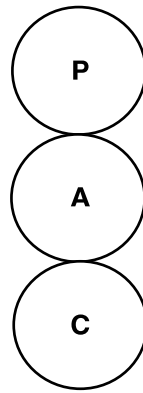


Figure 1. Standard Ego State Diagram

Using the ego state diagram, discounting may be diagrammed as in Figures 2, 3, 4, and 5. In self-discounting (Figure 2), the Critical Parent censors the individual's own ideas and cuts off creativity. *Example:* The Parent says to the Child, "That is a dumb idea; everybody will laugh at you." In discounting of the other (Figure 3), the Critical Parent censors the ideas of the "other," or the Adult approaches materials in an analytical, critical manner in order to find weak points. *Example:* The Parent of one says to the Child of the other, "You always come up with dumb ideas." Or the Adult of one says to the Adult of the other: "Your idea will not work because of A, B, C . . .," with an ulterior message from Adult to Child saying "The idea is useless." In discounting of the problem (Figure 4), the Parent-contaminated Adult might say, "People do not talk about problems. You should be able to solve your own problems." In discounting of the solvability of the problem (Figure 5), the Child-contaminated Adult (showing a feeling of inadequacy) might say, "I can't handle problems."

Other Nonproblem-Solving Behaviors

Gregory (1967, p. 88) provides a listing of sixty-three ways to block ideas in problem solving. A few of these are summarized here.

1. *Prejudging of ideas.* When a new idea is suggested, pounce on it immediately or accept it immediately without examination. Prejudging may be either negative or positive.
2. *Prepare official statements with respect to the problem.* Instead of listening to what others are saying, know in your own mind the "right solution," and after an appropriate discussion time impress the others with your knowledge.
3. *Respond with "yes, but . . ." statements.* This is a simple way to block problem solving. After each of the suggestions simply say, "That sounds good, but . . .," and then come up with something you do not like about the idea.
4. *Compete with the other people in the group.* Make sure your idea is the one that is used.

5. *Pose your ideas in question form:* e.g., “Do you think X might work?” Questions allow you not to be responsible for the idea. They can also be used to put down another person; e.g., “You don’t actually believe that, do you?” or “Don’t you really think . . .?”

PROBLEM-SOLVING BEHAVIOR: GETTING ON WITH IT

Two major permissions are essential for this phase of problem solving. The first is *permission to be aware of problems*. In many settings participants equate having problems with not being adequate in their jobs; i.e., they are not O.K. if they have problems, or, if they admit to problems, others will see them as incompetent or weak. The problem-solving group provides a setting in which it is O.K. to have problems and to share those problems.

The second major permission involved in problem-solving groups is *permission to solve problems*. Frequently in problem-solving groups there are individuals who give themselves permission to talk about problems but not to solve them: the “ain’t it awful” approach. The major interest is in finding someone or something to blame and to prove once again that the problem is not solvable. Two questions can facilitate the move from talking to resolving: What do you want to do? How do you want to do it?

An essential ingredient in problem-solving groups is an atmosphere of nurturing in which the participant does not feel defensive or under attack. An important function of the group (and, in particular, the leader) is to be protective of the ideas and personhood of each participant. When discounting occurs, it is confronted in a manner that is consistent with a nurturing environment. Self-discounting may be confronted by the question “Will you give yourself permission to share your ideas?” or “Will you put the censor in your head outside the room?” Discounting can be confronted creatively by the leader and group members in such a manner that each incident of discounting becomes an opportunity for new ideas and new input.

Recording Ideas

In a creative, nurturing group the participants take their own ideas and the ideas of other participants seriously. Newsprint on the wall for ideas to be recorded as the sessions move along is an excellent way to affirm the ideas of the participants. And if the recorder uses the exact words of the participants, there is an added affirmation for the participant: your idea is important and the words that you have used to describe the idea are important. When it is difficult to remember the exact words of the participant, the participant can be asked to repeat his or her ideas slowly for the recorder.

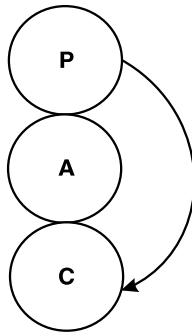


Figure 2. Discounting of the Self

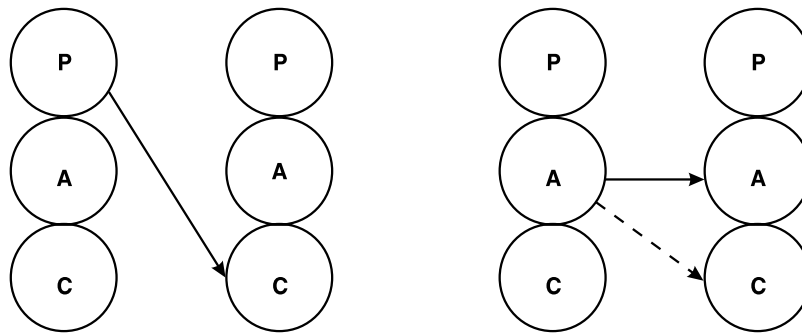


Figure 3. Discounting of the Other

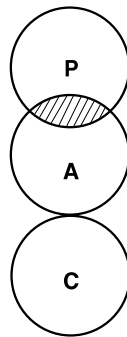


Figure 4. Discounting of the Problem

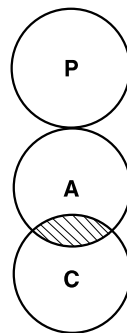


Figure 5. Discounting of the Solvability of the Problem

Spectrum Policy

Another tool used in creative problem solving is the spectrum policy⁵ (Figure 6). As a color spectrum is made up of various shades of color, so an idea is composed of various shades of meaning. Instead of seeing an idea as “good” or “bad,” the spectrum policy allows every idea to be seen on a continuum from plus to minus. Using the spectrum policy, when an idea is heard three questions are asked: (1) What can be used from the idea? (2) What concerns are there about the idea? and (3) What options are there for turning the concerns into opportunities? The third step is important. Without it, blocks are left in the way of possible solutions; with it, the blocks are removed.

Creativity is the ability to hear old ideas in new ways and to find new twists in old solutions. Sometimes in problem-solving groups totally new solutions are discovered for the client, but, more frequently, the client’s creativity is in listening intently to the participants’ ideas and choosing the material that can be used. This is when the spectrum policy assists creativity. For example, the problem might be “how to initiate workshops on energy conservation.” A participant speaks of rewards for the individual who recruits a workshop. The rest of the participant’s idea is old but the part about the reward is new. Thus, the client might concentrate on that aspect. Then another participant talks of paying people to recruit for workshops. Here the client applies the spectrum policy as shown below.

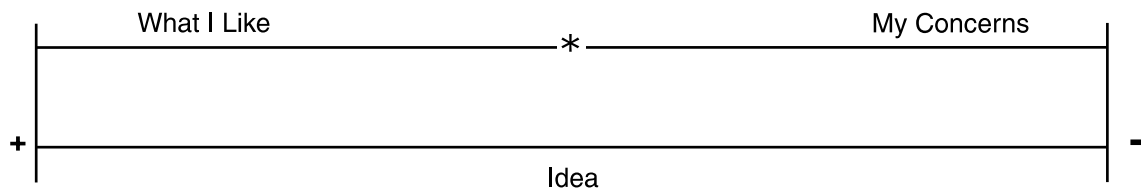


Figure 6. The Spectrum Policy

What I like about your idea is (“likes” should be specific):

- I would not have to depend on volunteer help.
- The financial reward would provide added incentive.

My concern is (another specific):

- We do not have the money to pay for recruitment in the budget.

Concern to opportunity:

- I can turn that concern into an opportunity by adding an additional \$25 fee to the cost of the workshop. That way I can offer a financial reward to those who recruit workshops.

By using the spectrum policy, a usable idea was achieved from an idea that was not initially seen as usable.

⁵ The spectrum policy is also referred to as “itemized response.” See Rose (1972, p. 13).

What happens in the spectrum approach is listening. Each idea is heard and evaluated. The part of the idea that can be applied is taken and used. Usable parts of ideas are built on by group members and the end result is new ideas or new twists on old ideas. A parallel is the recent concern with the waste of natural resources: many groups waste ideas in the same way—they are thrown away or trampled on. The spectrum policy offers the serious problem solver a tool with which to get the most mileage possible out of the ideas of the group.

Change is often resisted. Frequently people have a vested interest in not changing or solving problems. The leader of a problem-solving group can help the client be aware of the energy he or she may have invested in not changing and the good things that will happen when the problem is solved. Being aware of the pleasure involved in problem solving is called the “ice cream cone effect.”⁶ Changes in ways of solving problems happen because of a movement *toward*, not simply *away*. It is not sufficient for an individual, group, or organization *to stop doing something*; it is also necessary to *start doing something*. Discounting must be stopped, but new behaviors, such as positive reinforcement, building on ideas, and use of the spectrum policy, must also be begun.

When problems are resolved, participants, leader, and client leave with win-win feelings. Participants feel O.K. about themselves, their potency and creativity to deal with problems; the leader feels O.K. about himself or herself and his or her ability to create a nurturing and problem-solving environment; and the client is pleased because he or she has new options to deal with the problem.

The Problem-Solving Environment

Problem solving does not happen in a vacuum. It happens when there is positive stroking (recognition), freedom to develop ideas, cooperation within the group, competition directed against the problem, building on the ideas of others, open and encouraged speculation, and a playful and creative atmosphere.

“Stroking,” a concept of transactional analysis, is simply a way of giving recognition, which may be verbal or nonverbal, positive or negative. Positive strokes recognize the other person with a message that says “I like you” or “I like what you did.” Negative strokes are units of recognition that say “I do not like you” or “I do not like what you did.” Both positive and negative strokes may concern a particular behavior or the whole being of a person. Strokes given for the behavior of an individual are conditional strokes and those given for the being of a person are unconditional. An example of each type of stroke is found in Table 1.

⁶ Thanks to Ralph Meyers, who first used this term in describing the rewards in problem solving.

Table 1. Types of Strokes

	Conditional	Unconditional
Positive	<i>Doing</i> recognition: "I like the excellent way you summarize material."	<i>Being</i> recognition: "You are a great person. I enjoy you."
Negative	<i>Doing</i> recognition: "I think you did a poor job in presenting that material."	<i>Being</i> recognition: "You are incompetent and inadequate."

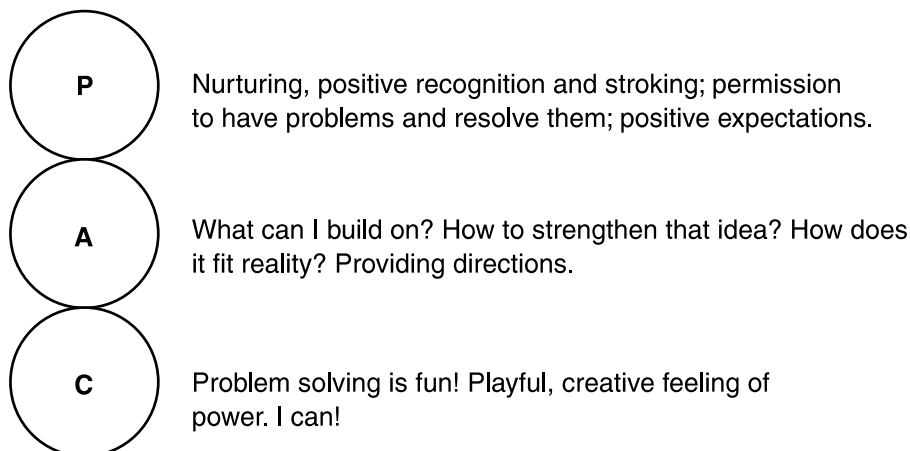
In the problem-solving setting, positive conditional, positive unconditional, and negative conditional stroking are all useful. Negative unconditional stroking has no place since the basic being of a person is being challenged. Negative conditional stroking, however, can be useful to point out weak points, although it needs to be monitored so that it does not become discounting.

Positive stroking gives recognition to the parts of an idea that have value and merit. When ideas are listened to and heard, individuals or groups are more willing to share. In the process of giving positive recognition to ideas, the individual's being is also positively recognized.

Freedom to develop ideas means that instead of demanding exact, final solutions, approximation and speculation are allowed. As an idea begins to form, it is built on by others in the group, and the group's energy is directed toward solving the problem and not toward competition among individuals in the group.

There is also the aspect of fun. Problem solving can be fun and can create an energized group in which there is excitement and enthusiasm for problem solving.

Effective problem solving happens when the ego states function as follows:



CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING: TWO PROCESSES⁷

Problem solving involves three ingredients: (1) the technical materials, which include such items as newsprint, magic markers, video- or audiotape, room setting, etc.; (2) the organization of the technical materials and of the people involved, which could be a process chart of who does what when and what is needed when; and (3) the interpersonal relations between the people involved, which include trust, listening (or nonlistening), and group norms.

The two specific tools discussed here, Syn 1 and Syn 2, focus attention mainly on the organizational ingredient of problem solving.

Role Definition

Another way of looking at the roles of leader, client, and participant as they have been discussed here is through the transactional analysis concepts of Parent, Adult, and Child. Given these concepts, the roles may be described as follows:

Leader: The leader's role is to provide Nurturing Parent permissions and protection to the client and the participants. The leader's Parent needs to be sensitive to Critical Parent interventions and provide protection from the Critical Parent for the client and participants. The leader's Adult continually evaluates the interaction of the process, client, and participants. The Adult makes decisions about when to move to new steps and what might work best at particular points. The leader's Child is crucial in keeping the energy level high and is also important in initiating excursions from the problem.

Client: The Parent of the client needs to give the client permission to hear ideas and to have others work on the problem. The Adult weighs the material that is suggested. And the Child is involved in playing with ideas as they come up. Thus the Parent withholds judgment on an idea until the Child has had an opportunity to play with it and the Adult to pull out the workable parts of the idea.

Participants: An important Parent function of the participants is to provide permission for the leader to direct the process and for the client to own the problem. The nurturing Parent, then, sees the problem as the client's and does not say, "I must solve this..." The Adult of the participants searches for data from past and present experiences that may be useful for the client. The Child of the participants is one of the crucial elements: it provides excitement, energy, and creativity; it is the part that approximates and initiates ideas. The Child begins to play with possible solutions and then the Adult picks up on possible solutions and develops them into workable solutions.

⁷ The two processes labeled Syn 1 and Syn 2 are based on writing about the Synectics process. Syn 1 can be found in Prince (1970). Syn 2, as well as the distinctions between Syn 1 and Syn 2, can be found in Rickards (1975, pp. 78–96). Both Syn 1 and Syn 2 are dated processes since Synectics is constantly developing new material. Both have, however, been very useful with various groups with which the author has worked.

Syn 1

The interaction of the roles of leader, client, and participants is an important part of the problem-solving process. The flow chart in Figure 7 illustrates the flow of Syn 1.

Problem as Given: stated by the client in a “how to . . .” form in the client’s own words.

Clarification: two minutes. During this time, the participants ask the client clarifying questions. However, these questions need to be kept to a minimum because part of the uniqueness of this process is in using the different understandings and perceptions that the participants have concerning the problem. Keeping clarifications to a minimum may prevent participants from discounting their unique understandings and perceptions. Often, lying behind a question of clarification is a possible solution to the problem, and this solution may be discarded when the question is answered.

Purge: immediate solutions. One of the functions of the purge is to free the participants to think about new or different ideas by allowing them to get out of their minds any immediate solutions they have. Some groups will produce many immediate solutions and other groups will produce only one or two. With a creative group, the problem-solving process may not move beyond the purge phase. If the client gets enough ideas out of the purge, the process may simply end.

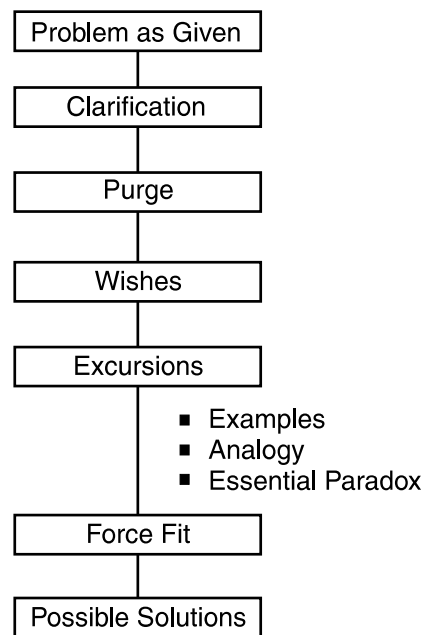


Figure 7. A Flow Chart for Syn 1

Wishes: for the client. Participants are encouraged not to censor their wishes for the client and his or her problem: any wish is acceptable. Wishes excite the Child ego state

that believes in fairy godmothers/fathers and magic wands. Wishes may be stated in this way: “My wish for (client) is that . . .” Wishes can also be a way of goal setting. They provide a time to break from the usual answers to the problem and give participants an opportunity to express feelings about the problem as well as thoughts; e.g., “I wish I were not confused; this is such a complicated problem.” Again, this phase can be a release that allows the participant to engage the problem.

Excursions: vacations from the problem. During this phase, the leader is the only person who stays with the problem; others give their full attention to the excursion. Excursions are fun and are especially useful when there is a blocking by the participants or when the room is filled with “experts.” Breaking with the problem allows new thinking patterns to develop and lead to unexplored ideas. Typical excursions include:

- *Providing examples from an improbable world.* This technique is used to get participants away from the problem by asking them, for example, to give examples of communications from the world of rocks, etc.
- *Personal analogy.* This excursion involves the participants in becoming something, for example, a rock. How does it feel to be a rock? What is your experience as a rock?
- *Essential paradox.* The participants are asked to pick one word and then come up with phrases including that word that are exactly the opposite in meaning. For example, essential paradoxes with *freedom* could be “free confinement,” “structured freedom,” “condemned freedom,” etc.

In all these excursions, the goal is to get the participants away from the problem. A word selected from the wishes phase (or selected by the client) can be used as the jumping-off point for the excursions.

Force Fit: taking the material from the excursions and literally forcing it on the problem. This phase can be done in a variety of ways. The participants may be asked simply to come up with relationships they see between the fantasy material and the problem: what immediate solutions are suggested? Or, if immediate ideas are not forthcoming, the leader can use a “get-fired” technique. The participants imagine a solution so outrageous that the client would immediately be fired for suggesting it. Then this outrageous idea is played with until workable solutions are achieved. Each participant’s “get-fired” solution can be worked with in turn or one “get-fired” solution can be chosen and worked on by the total group until some practical solutions are arrived at.

Possible Solutions: those that the participants have arrived at with the assistance of the client. The client reviews them and then develops a scenario about one possible solution. The client describes in what way it is a solution and the first step to be taken in implementing it.

Table 2 (shown below) shows the three roles of leader, client, and participants as seen in the context of the Syn 1 flow chart.

Table 2. Syn 1: Roles and Phases

	<i>Leader</i>	<i>Client</i>	<i>Participants</i>
PAG	Write down exact wording of client.	State problem in “How to . . .” form	Hear problem.
Clarification (two min.)	Keep time of clarification to the minute.	Answer questions directly.	Ask questions needed for immediate clarification. Be aware if immediate solutions are censored.
Purge	Get out immediate solutions. Turn questions toward client into statements.	Use the spectrum policy with immediate solutions. Also be aware of possible restatement of problem.	Get out immediate solutions—important so that participants will be freed up for other possible solutions.
Wishes	Explore and use unique ways the client sees problem. Give permission to group for free speculation. Kick censor out.	Be sensitive to possible solutions in <i>wishes</i> . State own <i>wishes</i> .	State wishes for client. Any wish goes.
Excursions	Get participants as far from the problem as quickly as possible.	Go with the excursion. Be sensitive to areas of possible solutions.	Go with the excursion. Do not think “How does this apply to problem?” Set problem aside.
Force Fit	Use “Get-fired” technique. Force-fit items. When participants seem stuck, offer possible directions and then when an idea gets rolling, stay with participants’ idea.	Listen closely. Use spectrum policy. Be sensitive to possible solutions. Request leader to explore further areas that seem important.	Pull the excursion into reality. Be aware of general statements and pull them into specifics for the client.
Possible Solutions	Look back over material with client. What is liked? Concerns? What would he or she like to do with concerns? Be sensitive to material in <i>purge</i> , viewpoints. Also be aware of material of wishes that may be important.	Be sensitive to each idea. Give credit to participants for good ideas. After spectrum on possible solutions, keep newsprint for future reference.	Listen. Give input where appropriate.

Syn 2

A flow chart for Syn 2 is given in Figure 8.

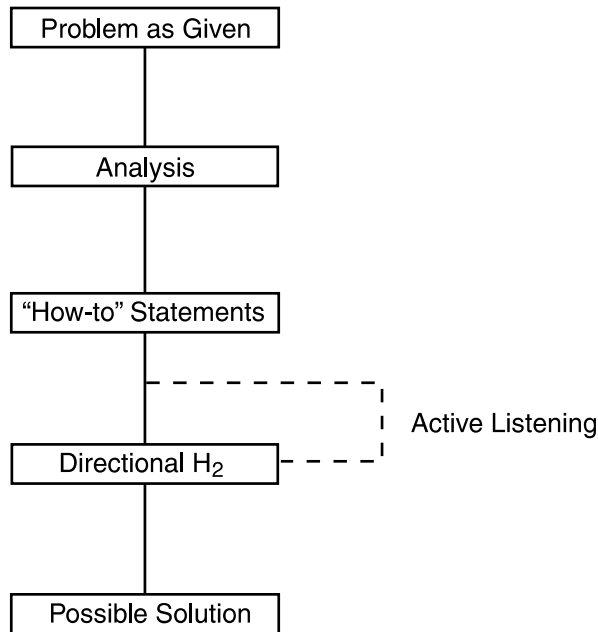


Figure 8. A Flow Chart for Syn 2

Problem as Given: This phase is very similar to that in Syn 1. The leader may talk with the client outside of the session in a premeeting. The leader asks the client if he or she is willing (1) to let the leader take charge of the process and (2) to use the spectrum policy with the ideas suggested. During the actual group session, the participants write down various “How to ... (H2) statements they hear in the client’s problem as given (PAG).

Analysis: During the analysis, the leader asks the client several questions: (1) How is the PAG a problem for him or her? (2) What kind of things has he or she tried? (3) Does the client think that there is a possible solution? (4) What would the client like from the group? During this discussion, the participants are writing down H2s that come to their minds.

H2 Statements: Next, the leader asks each participant in the group for two or three crucial H2’s that he or she has written down. These are put up on newsprint.

Directional H2: The client is asked to pick a statement that he or she likes and wishes to pursue for the moment—a directional H2 statement. When the directional H2 is chosen, the client is asked if he or she sees this as the seed of a possible solution to his or her PAG. If yes, then the next step is to build on the idea and identify the major blocks in the idea. Each block is dealt with until the idea reaches the point of acceptability for the client.

If the client becomes blocked and cannot proceed, the leader calls on the resources of the group to assist the client in the development of the idea. During this time, the

participants are still writing down H2's as they hear the client talk, but these are used only when the client needs them. If the client does have ideas, the participants jot down H2 statements, and these are turned over to the client at the end of the session.

Possible Solutions: When the directional H2 reaches the point of acceptability, the client summarizes the possible solution and details the first steps to be taken in its implementation. Then the process is repeated, with the client picking up another H2 and carrying that through, until the contract between the client and the group is completed.

A note on excursions: Excursions can be used in Syn 2 at any point where there is a block. The function of the excursions is to assist the group to get around a block in the way of possible solutions. Excursions might also be used to energize a group.

Table 3 shows the three roles of leader, client, and participants as seen in the context of the Syn 2 flow chart.

Table 3. Syn 2: Roles and Phases

	<i>Leader</i>	<i>Client</i>	<i>Participants</i>
PAG	Get client's H ₂ on newsprint. Ask about client's willingness to do spectrum and let leader be in charge of process.	State PAG in H ₂ form.	Write down H ₂ statements.
Analysis	Ask client questions about PAG.	Respond to question.	Write down H ₂ statements as you perceive the problem.
H₂ Statements	Ask each participant to show at least two H ₂ statements.	Listen to statements. Make note of attractive H ₂ 's.	Share a minimum of two H ₂ statements.
Directional H₂	Ask a client to pick a directional H ₂ that contains the possible seed of a solution. Ask client to identify the strengths of idea, the major blocks, the options to major blocks. If client becomes blocked, ask group for ideas. As group shares ideas, the client comments on them using the spectrum policy.	Pinpoint what parts of directional H ₂ are possible seeds of solutions. Identify major weaknesses of idea. Look at options for overcoming weaknesses.	Continue writing down H ₂ 's. When needed by client, give input.
Possible Solutions	Have client summarize. How is it a solution? What are the first steps?	State summary of possible solutions. Develop first steps for implementing.	After session give written H ₂ ideas to client.

Determinant of Successful Problem Solving

Client satisfaction is the determinant of a successful problem-solving session. The leader checks whether the client is satisfied and accepts the possible solutions. If the client says “yes,” the leader may make a further check by asking: (1) Is the solution new or unique? (2) Do you have specifics? (3) Do you have a first step in mind? At the end of a creative session, the client will have a great deal of material to sort through and these questions will help him or her begin to get the material in perspective.

One final statement: The objective of the problem-solving session is to provide the client with some options or possible solutions. The client is the ultimate “buyer” or “nonbuyer” of possible solutions and the group is hired to provide ideas. It is the client’s responsibility to implement the possible solution(s).

Operating Hints

Several operating hints are important guidelines for the leader in using the process described.

1. Be sure to do a quick overview of the process so that the participants will have an idea of the overall process.
2. Explain the three roles of client, participant, and leader in some detail. This may be a unique approach for the participants.
3. Write all the material generated on newsprint in front of the group. This will be a good reference for the client later. A recorder may be used if the recording process takes too much time from the group. It is important to remember that the respondents’ own words should be recorded, thus reinforcing the importance and value of the participants’ ideas.
4. Be flexible. The purpose of the process is to “solve a problem,” and if at some point the process begins to block the possible solution, move on to something else.

Some specific hints for the leader in the various phases of the process:

1. During the PAG, listen closely to the client’s description. It is especially important that you be aware of any hesitation or doubt on the client’s part regarding the solvability of the problem. If the client believes the problem has no solutions, the problem will not be solved.
2. During the purge, be alert to the client’s responses to a possible solution. If the client responds with “I’ve already tried that . . .,” immediately request the client to use the spectrum policy. In some groups, enough ideas will come out during the purge that the client will feel satisfied with the process. At the point when the client says, “I’ve got what I wanted,” the process can be stopped.
3. The wishes phase may be introduced this way: “If you were to have one wish for the client and his or her problem, what would it be?” The participant may be able

to work through his or her frustration concerning a particular problem during this time.

4. Since the object of the excursions is to break with the problem, whatever you, the leader, do to accomplish this is appropriate. If the group members have so much fun during this time that they do not want to get back to work, you need to be tactful. The choice of excursion material is dependent on you: have fun with it. There is no correct order for the varieties of excursions and no need to use all of them. When dealing with people problems, use examples and personal analogies from the world of inanimate objects. Some good “worlds” might be machines, metals, automobiles, geology, outer space, etc. Some good “worlds” for excursions when working on problems of things might be animals, plants, the out-of-doors, school, parts of the anatomy, etc.
5. The key in the force-fit phase is to use the group. Let the group itself come up with the fittings. Sometimes you will not get an immediate response from the participants. At that point you may begin to force-fit the material yourself until a participant picks it up.
6. In the last phase, again, let the client work. Have him or her develop the material into its final form. This is important for implementation. If the client takes the material, works with it, and details the steps, there is a greater probability that the implementation will be done.

Advantages/Disadvantages

Advantages in using the creative problem-solving processes include the following:

1. The method works exceptionally well when people feel in a “rut” or blocked with a problem.
2. The process is *fun*—a lot of energy is flowing.
3. The client will be able to get a number of new perspectives on his or her problem.
4. Structure and creativity are provided. While there is a specific structure, there is plenty of room for creativity.
5. Participants feel very involved in the process.

Disadvantages of the creative problem-solving processes include the following:

1. Participants may have difficulty with the excursions. They may be very reluctant to “fantasize,” or the excursion will be so delightful that they will be reluctant to stop.
2. The process works best with small groups, i.e., six to eight members.
3. If the problem is a group problem, the group may have difficulty with the concept of the client.

4. The leader may need a fair amount of training. On one hand, the process is very easy, but on the other hand, leader preparation is significant.

Resources Needed

Very few resources are needed to run a session. The essentials are:

1. Plenty of large sheets (24" x 36") of newsprint—about five sheets per problem.
2. Felt-tipped markers or crayons.

APPLICATIONS OF CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING

The creative problem-solving processes discussed may be used in a variety of ways. The obvious way is problem solving in a group. The processes can also be effectively used in the following situations.

1. *A “one-to-one” counseling setting.* Simply putting a problem into the “how to...” format will generate energy toward problem solving. The specific tools—excursions, wishes, spectrum, etc.—can be readily used in the one-to-one encounter.
2. *Team building.* The method effectively (a) offers training in a specific problem-solving tool, (b) focuses energies on current problems the team is facing, and (c) provides the team members an opportunity to reflect on how effective they are as a team in problem solving. At the end of a training session the participants have learned skills in communication, problem solving, and conflict management, while working on significant problems.
3. *Staff and committee meetings.* Staff members may be trained to focus on problems quickly and effectively while also providing a supportive environment for one another. More productive staff meetings can be the result. Through the use of the excursion material, staff meetings may also generate excitement and energy.
4. *Workshops focused on a theme.* For example, a workshop on program evaluation will contain didactic material as well as time for the participants to identify problems they are having with evaluation. The problems can be put into a “how to...” format, and, after a brief overview of the process, the group can engage in problem solving.

There are many other exciting uses for the processes described: possibilities exist in personal growth groups, communication groups, family work, conflict management, etc. The leader is encouraged to explore various adaptations that can make the methods fit a particular need or experience.

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■ A NINE-STEP PROBLEM-SOLVING MODEL

Leigh C. Earley and Pearl B. Rutledge

As individual people, we are confronted with problems—some serious, many not so serious—and somehow most of them are resolved. However, when several people become a group and a serious problem surfaces that the group must deal with, otherwise capable and functioning people can become immobilized. Often a feeling of helplessness results, and the most immediate concern for group members and leaders is likely to be overcoming the feeling of impotence. Some will suggest a digression to other matters (which is really a method of avoiding the problem): “I know this is important, but it can wait until after we deal with” Others will seek to place blame for the problem, preferably on something outside the group: “The real problem is inflation, which makes our dollars worth less.” And still others will, for a time, withdraw from the group, if not physically at least emotionally.

If, indeed, people solve the problems that arise in their own lives, why cannot these same people solve group problems? There seem to be three basic reasons that people’s natural problem-solving ability cannot easily be transferred to working in a group:

1. Because there are several people involved, people frequently assume that the problem is bigger than their ability.
2. Many people are unaware of their problem-solving skill because they have never thought of it as such.
3. Groups tend to reject tentative solutions before giving them a thorough hearing, consequently reducing people’s desire to contribute further solutions.

A NINE-STEP PROBLEM-SOLVING MODEL

This problem-solving model (Figure 1) is designed for individuals and small groups and may be applied to any problem regardless of its size or intensity. For more complex problems, the model may be used in successive rounds on different aspects of the problem through step V; then the various choices can be integrated into a single or coordinated plan of action.

The problem-solving model is designed to be used by following the steps or arrows as indicated. At several points it is necessary to make choices; those choices will have significant effects on the overall problem-solving effort.

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- Counterproductive Steps:**
- Deny the problem
 - Ignore the problem
 - Blame something for the problem
 - Blame oneself for the problem

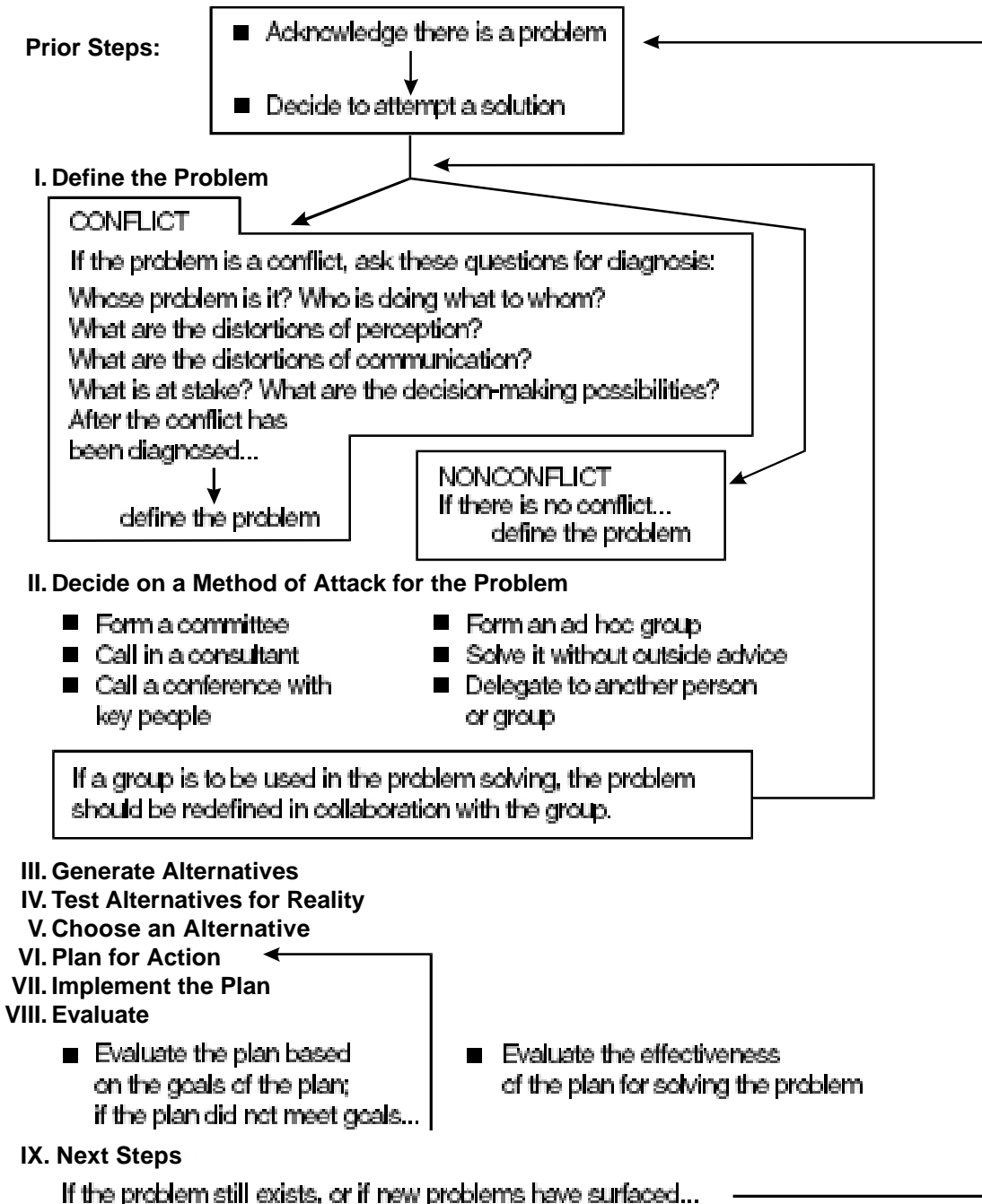


Figure 1. The Nine-Step Problem-Solving Model

Counterproductive Steps

As indicated, these steps are unnecessary, although they frequently delude us into a false sense of security about the problem. They do nothing to resolve it, while in many cases allowing the situation to become worse. Denying or ignoring the problem (a form of withdrawal) frequently takes a great deal of energy away from some more productive activities; and, even if blame can be placed or self-blame is justified, these approaches do nothing to remedy the situation.

Prior Steps

Before any action can be taken to resolve a problem, we must recognize that it exists. But acknowledging the problem is not enough; deciding to do something about it is also essential. Many of us know people who admit that smoking is bad for their health but continue to smoke regularly: What is lacking is the decision to do something about the problem.

Acknowledging that there is a problem does not necessitate having a clear understanding of the whole problem or all of its possible effects; deciding to attempt a solution does not imply that there must be a clear idea of what that solution might be or even of how to best approach finding a solution.

I. Define the Problem: Conflict or Nonconflict

Many problems present themselves as conflicts. The six diagnostic questions included in the problem-solving model may help to get below the conflict. The purpose of the diagnosis is to define the problem, but occasionally diagnosis reveals some clues about possible alternative solutions or possible methods of attacking the problem.

If the problem is not a conflict, it is still essential to come to a definition of the problem.

If several people (as a group or independently) are working on the problem, it is especially important to have a common definition, preferably in writing. A definition provides clarity, understanding, and a commonality of purpose. How a problem is defined will either expand or limit the possible solutions, and it is desirable to define a problem in such a way as to maximize the possible solutions.

II. Decide on a Method of Attack for the Problem

The scope, intensity, and urgency of the problem should be considered when deciding which method to apply. There may be additional methods that can be considered. If a group method is used, it is best to include, if possible, representatives from any organized group or program that will be affected by the problem or potential solutions. The best group size for problem solving seems to be five to seven people.

III. Generate Alternatives

The method known as brainstorming is frequently used for this step. In brainstorming, everyone is encouraged to suggest possible solutions, and *no* ideas are rejected or evaluated until all ideas have been noted. Even seemingly ridiculous alternatives should be shared and listed; they may be the spark needed to produce a really creative solution. The most important aspect of this step is to generate many possible solutions before selecting one.

IV. Test Alternatives for Reality

The most important thing to keep in mind during this step is not to eliminate possibilities too quickly. The “itemized response,” which requires three positive statements to be given before a negative statement can be voiced about an alternative, is a good device for reality testing. The itemized response reduces the tendency of a group to discard an idea before seeing the positive values that it may have.

If there are many possible solutions, it may be necessary to place them in some order of priority before testing. One method is to allow each participant to choose a specified number of alternatives that must be considered before any are eliminated. When time permits, it is wise to apply the itemized response to all alternatives suggested, even those that do not receive a priority rating.

V. Choose an Alternative

Force-field analysis (see Spier, 1973) is a good device for making final choices. Simply stated, force-field analysis involves listing those forces that attract one to the use of a particular alternative and those forces that repel one from the same alternative. The two lists can be placed side by side for easy comparison.

Some problems require multiple solutions. The process does not always result in the choice of a single alternative. But caution should be taken not to choose more solutions than the available resources can implement.

VI. Plan for Action

There are many usable planning processes, including several designed for use with groups. In problem solving it is necessary to choose a planning process appropriate to the potential solution chosen. The most difficult part of planning is to keep the problem and potential solution in view at all times. It is possible to become so involved in planning that what results is a program that has no effect on the problem or that ignores the previous alternative selection.

VII. Implement the Plan

Part of planning is to determine who is responsible for carrying out the various parts of the plan. This step is simply stated: *Get on with it.*

VIII. Evaluate

Evaluation occurs at two levels. The first level is an evaluation of the action plan itself. How well did the plan meet the goals and objectives that were set? If it is discovered that the basic goals and objectives of the plan were not met, it may be desirable to go back to step VII and develop a new method of implementation for the plan or return to step VI to develop a new plan.

The second level of evaluation rates the effectiveness of the overall problem-solving effort. How well did the plan contribute to the solving of the problem? The results of this evaluation may lead to the next steps.

IX. Next Steps

Adequate follow-up on evaluation is important. If the problem still exists or some new problems have been uncovered, the people or group involved may need to take some action. That action could include a continued commitment to work on the problem or a return to the point of redefining the problem.

Even when the problem has been resolved, follow-up is helpful to participants and the organization. At the very least, a word of appreciation is required for those who helped to make the solution work. In some cases the plan may need to become a part of the regular processes of the organization or stored as a resource for the future. It is also good for the individuals and the organization to summarize what was learned about problem solving.

SKILLS AND ATTITUDES

The basic skills and positive attitudes of a problem solver will increase as the person gains experience, particularly in successful problem solving. A problem-solving venture is successful when the problem is eliminated or reduced or when the people affected are more able to cope. People are not problems; people are either resources or blocks in problem solving.

A goal of the Nine-Step Problem-Solving Model is to enable people to become resources rather than blocks in problem solving. To accomplish this, the problem solvers need to cultivate certain attitudes:

1. A healthy *self-respect* accompanied by a self-image that accepts the consequences of one's own personal worth and contributions;
2. A *respect for others* that is sufficient to cause one to doubt malice or ineptitude in one's enemies and to encourage one to use listening and clarifying skills at all times;
3. An *optimism* that says that any problem can be solved if the parties are willing to work long enough to find a mutually acceptable solution;
4. A *respect for*—not fear of—conflict as a potentially creative process; and

5. A *willingness* to invest energy and take risks in an effort to reduce or resolve problems.

Some essential skills are needed throughout the process of problem solving. These include active *listening*, *clarifying*, *paraphrasing*, *self-disclosure*, *team building*, and *facilitating the development of group process*.

Other skills are needed at specific points in the process: *diagnostic* skills in steps I and II; *decision-making* skills in steps II through V; *data-collecting* skills in steps V and VI; *design and planning* skills in steps V through VIII; *organizing* and *administrative* skills in step VII; *evaluation* and *analysis* skills in step VIII.

It is good to have these special skills available to the group through at least one of its members. If that is not possible, then the group should seek skilled help from some other resource person or consider using a consultant.

Leadership Style

Extremely important is the leadership style of the person initiating the problem-solving effort. If that person's style is radically different from the style of others in the problem-solving effort, attention needs to be given to the differences and to the varied expectations that those differences may imply. The more democratic and collaborative the style of the leaders, the easier it will be for them to use the Nine-Step Problem-Solving Model.

GROUP OR INDIVIDUAL SOLUTIONS

Serious problems deserve serious problem-solving efforts. The more wide-ranging the problem or the higher the stakes if it is not solved, the more important it is that the group dedicate time and energy to the task of problem solving.

There are, however, many problems that do not need the efforts of a group. The situation may involve only a few people, or in many cases the problem can be solved by a person alone. These are times when it is appropriate, as a method of attack, to consider conferring with key people, delegating to another, using a consultant, or deriving a solution without outside advice.

A nongroup method of attack would also be appropriate when the problem is so critical that there is no time to convene a group or when all of the people involved have a radically different style of leadership from one's preferred leadership style. If one desires to move toward a more collaborative and democratic style of leadership and decision making, it may well be that a collaborative problem-solving effort is a good time to demonstrate the value of such a style. One must, however, be prepared to take the risks and invest the energy.

The Nine-Step Problem-Solving Model is not dependent on a group to be effective. It can be used by nonprofessionals or by consultants, or with key leaders to work through a problem.

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■ CREATIVITY AND CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING

Martin B. Ross

Creativity and creative problem solving are much-researched but little-understood processes (Stievater, 1973a, 1973b). The topics studied include creative personality, creative problem formulation; the creative process; creative products or outcomes; the creative climate or environment; and the relationships among creativity, intelligence, and mental health. But no one factor, or combination of factors, explains the accomplishments of a Leonardo da Vinci, a Thomas Edison, or a Ludwig von Beethoven.

Creativity is an intriguing and controversial topic. The controversy and the absence of a unified theory do not mean that research efforts have been fruitless. Studies have revealed that there are certain factors that block the creative process and that a conscious effort to avoid or overcome these blocks can enhance creativity. In addition, laboratory and empirical research have produced techniques that facilitate creative problem solving.

BARRIERS TO CREATIVITY

Barriers to creativity have been described as “mental walls which block the problem-solver from correctly perceiving a problem or conceiving its solution” (Adams, 1974, p. 11). These walls, which exist for all of us but vary in quantity and intensity, are of two types: structural and process. The common structural barriers include psychological, cultural, and environmental blocks. Process barriers result from our choice of thinking language, our functional fixedness, and our tendency habitually to visualize things in the same way. Expanding awareness and understanding of these impediments is a first step toward more creative problem solving. The framework used here to describe these blocks is based on the work of Adams (1974).

Psychological Barriers

A variety of psychological factors serve to block individual creativity by inhibiting the freedom with which we explore and transform ideas, impeding our conceptual abilities, and blocking communication. The more common psychological blocks to creativity include our preference for the predictable and orderly and, conversely, our intolerance of the unknown or ambiguous; our high achievement motivation and quick success orientation and, conversely, our inability to allow ideas to incubate and develop; our

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tendency to value our sensory perceptions (that which is) to the exclusion of our intuitive perceptions (the possibilities); and our fear of failure.

These common psychological barriers exist because we are generally educated and socialized with an overriding emphasis on situations and learning experiences for which there is only one correct answer. Rarely is attention paid to and reward offered for the creative process itself. Because we seek to be liked and respected by others, searching for and “selling” unique, creative ideas or solutions involves risks—the risks of making a mistake, failing, being ridiculed, losing money, losing respect, or losing friends.

The psychological barriers to creativity are the most deep rooted and, hence, most difficult to overcome. The first step is to recognize their existence and to seek self-awareness. By identifying which psychological factors impede our own creativity, we can determine the techniques available to overcome the barriers.

Cultural Barriers

Certain aspects of our culture promote creativity and others impede it. We acquire from our parents, peers, teachers, and society at large a set of values, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. A high value placed on individuality and competition, for example, may promote the risk-taking behavior required for creative problem solving in certain situations. Conversely, a high value placed on reason, logic, numbers, and practicality may impede solutions requiring feeling, intuition, and qualitative judgments. Because fantasy, reflection, and playfulness are proscribed behaviors for adults, creativity is impeded in situations that may benefit from these behaviors. The prescription that problem-solving behavior be serious and humorless may also block creativity. Recognizing how aspects of culture may inhibit creativity is an important first step in overcoming blocks to creativity.

Environmental Barriers

Some aspects of our social and physical environments also act as blocks to creativity. Social blocks are illustrated by work or school settings in which the boss or teacher is threatened by new ideas, fails to act on new ideas, or fails to reward innovative thinking. Overcoming social blocks requires that teachers, bosses, peers, and colleagues recognize their roles in facilitating or impeding creativity and seek to design creative environments and engage in supportive behaviors.

Physical blocks are generally more obvious and more easily overcome than are social blocks. For some, a ringing telephone, a barking dog, or a blaring stereo impedes creativity. Others may find silence an impediment. By looking for the situations in which we seem most creative and productive, we can define our personal supportive physical environments and can seek them out when confronted with problems and opportunities requiring creativity.

Thinking Language Blocks

We have at our command a variety of languages with which to think about solutions to problems. Verbal, mathematical, visual, and other sensory languages are available individually and in combination. Selecting the correct thinking language may result in the most creative solution.

Adams (1974) offers an example of how the selection of thinking language affects problem solving. Picture a large piece of ordinary paper. In your imagination, fold it once (now it has two layers), fold it once more (into four layers), and continue folding it for 50 times. How thick is the folded paper? A mathematical approach would quickly reveal that the first fold results in a stack two times the original thickness. Extending the answer, the result is 2^{50} times the original thickness of the paper. Had we selected a visual or verbal approach, we undoubtedly would never arrive at the correct value.

Early in childhood we display preferences for different ways of thinking. We tend to use the processes we prefer, develop skill in using them, and thereby reinforce our preferences. Our preferred thinking patterns may promote creativity in certain situations and block it in others.

When confronted with a problem, we should consciously consider the various thought languages available and attempt to use whichever is most appropriate. When the problem-solving process becomes bogged down, it may be time to step back and examine which thinking language is being employed and consider the use of an alternative.

Functional Fixedness

Functional fixedness results from our tendency to use tools, people, and techniques in only one way. Raudsepp and Haugh (1977) illustrate functional fixedness. Imagine that you are standing in the middle of a room. You have been given the task of holding the ends of two strings suspended from the ceiling. The strings are located so that you cannot reach one string with your outstretched arm while holding the second. The room is bare except for a pair of pliers and a screwdriver. When presented with this problem, many people fail to think of using a belt or some other article of clothing to extend the length of one string so that they can reach the other. They also fail to consider tying the pliers or screwdriver to the end of one string, swinging it, and catching it, thereby solving the problem. These solutions involve overcoming our tendencies to use common items in conventional ways only—overcoming functional fixedness.

Habitual Ways of Visualizing

Our tendency to develop habitual ways of looking at things is a block to creativity best defined and illustrated by example. Let us say that there are four volumes of Shakespeare's collected works on the shelf. The pages of each volume are exactly two inches thick. Each cover is one sixth of an inch thick. If a bookworm starts eating at page one of volume one and eats through to the last page of volume four, how far does it

travel? The answer typically provided is nine inches. Rarely is the proper answer, five inches, given. People attempting to solve this problem are blocked by their habitual ways of visualizing books—facing them, with the first page near the left-hand cover and last page near the right-hand cover. This is the way we prepare to open books to read them, not the way they typically sit on a shelf with the order of pages reversed (Raudseep & Haugh, 1977).

There is a maxim in problem solving that the more familiar the object, the harder it is to see it in another context. Creativity can be enhanced, particularly in problems involving the familiar, if we seek to visualize them from new and different angles and in new and different ways.

TECHNIQUES THAT STIMULATE CREATIVITY

As the previous discussion indicates, avoiding and overcoming the common barriers to creativity are best achieved by altering thought and behavioral processes, even though these are among the most difficult changes to achieve. Fortunately, research on creativity has resulted in problem-solving and decision-making techniques that promote creativity in both individual people and groups. Creative problem finding, analogies, morphological analysis, a questioning attitude, and a creative climate promote creativity for individual people and groups. Brainstorming, “odd man in,” and designing a creative climate are techniques specifically designed to promote creativity within groups. These techniques, which have proven useful in overcoming barriers to and otherwise promoting creativity, are described in the following paragraphs.

Creative Problem Solving

Obviously, the problem itself is important for initiating solution-oriented thought; but little is known about how problems are discovered and formulated. The way in which a problem is stated or defined may determine the difference between a poorly solved or unsolved problem and a creative solution. Albert Einstein (cited in Getzels, 1975) stated:

The formulation of a problem is often more essential than its solution, which may be merely a matter of mathematical or experimental skill. To raise new questions, new possibilities, to regard old questions from a new angle, requires creative imagination. (p. 12)

The following example illustrates the importance of creative problem finding: An automobile traveling on a deserted road blows a tire. The occupants discover that there is no jack in the trunk. They define the problem as “finding a jack” and decide to walk to a station for a jack. Another automobile on the same road also blows a tire. The occupants also discover that there is no jack. They define the problem as “raising the automobile.” They see an old barn with a pulley for lifting bales of hay to the loft, push the car to the barn, raise it on the pulley, change the tire, and drive off while the occupants of the first car are still trudging toward the service station. One might comment, “What a clever solution.” “What a creative problem statement” is a more

accurate observation. The occupants of the second car ignored the obvious and formulated the problem in an unusual and fruitful way (Getzels, 1975).

Creative problem finding means not settling on the obvious problem, seeking to think divergently rather than convergently, raising new questions and new possibilities from new angles, and using one's imagination.

Use of Analogy

Using personal analogies to move information stored in the subconscious to a conscious level and thereby make it available for problem solving is an effective technique for promoting creativity. For example, in dealing with a problem related to water pollution, one might attempt to imagine how it would feel to be a polluted river. This technique expands creativity by allowing one to “get inside” the problem and view it from a different angle. Direct analogy, which often relies on biological or natural analogies, provides creative insight. Fantasy analogy is useful for overcoming cultural blocks to creativity. This technique encourages one to suspend natural laws and create a universe in which anything is possible. Faced with the problem of having to move water up a hill, one might find it interesting to suspend the laws of gravity and create a fantasy whereby water can flow uphill. It has been suggested that the divining rod and modern metal detectors originated from fantasies of magic wands (Wilson, Greer, & Johnson, 1973).

Morphological Analysis

Morphological analysis involves breaking a complex problem into components, listing as many alternatives as possible for each component, and then recombining the alternatives to create new variations. Consider the complex problem of creating a new mode of human transportation. Using morphological analysis, the problem can be broken into its component parts and alternatives can be listed. Component 1 might be defined as the carrier or support for the human being; alternatives might be a cart, a chair, a sling, and a bed. Component 2 might be the medium of support for the carrier, with surface, water, air, rollers, rails, and oil as alternatives, and so on. Once the major components and alternatives are identified, they can be put into combinations, for example, adding another component to make an electric rolling chair. It is obvious that a variety of potential modes of transportation—some feasible and others absurd—can be generated. A variety of possibilities that would not have been identified without morphological analysis now exist. One may be a creative solution to the problem (Parnes & Harding, 1962).

Questioning Attitude

Through probing and questioning, alternatives are generated and the possibility of discovering creative solutions is enhanced. Anyone who has spent time in the presence of young children has been the recipient of such questions as “Why is the ocean salty?” or “Where does the sun go at night?” A probing attitude appears to be almost instinctual

in children. Unfortunately, this characteristic diminishes as children mature to adulthood because adults discourage their questions. Older children avoid asking questions because they have learned that it is good to be smart and bad to be dumb, and silence does not reveal ignorance. But remaining silent removes a powerful weapon from one's learning arsenal. A questioning attitude is a useful technique for expanding one's creativity, and all one needs to do to develop a questioning attitude is to ask questions (Adams, 1974).

Brainstorming

The best-known group technique for expanding creativity is brainstorming, used for complex problem solving in groups ranging in size from two to seven. Brainstorming frees people from many of the previously described inhibitions and blocks to creativity. A cooperative group-problem-solving process, it is constrained by four basic rules:

1. Evaluation of any kind is not permitted; adverse or favorable judgments must be withheld. By withholding judgment, people avoid the tendency to defend their ideas and concentrate on generating ideas. This rule is particularly important when defining the problem and generating ideas and alternative solutions.
2. Freewheeling is encouraged and welcomed. The group seeks to include all possibilities, even the absurd, which can always be eliminated later.
3. As many ideas as possible are sought, the rationale being that the larger the number of ideas, the higher the probability that good ideas will be generated.
4. Combinations of, elaboration on, and improvements of ideas are encouraged to produce better, more creative solutions.

“Odd Man In”

The “odd-man-in” technique involves including in a problem-solving group one or more people who have little or no background or relationship to the problem at hand. This technique was developed because research has found that people have difficulty being creative about familiar things. The U.S. Navy employs this technique. For example, a home economist was included along with medical and naval experts in a group attempting to determine whether physician staffing on a nuclear submarine should be reduced. The “odd-man-in” technique can expand creativity directly by offering a unique perspective and indirectly by knocking group members out of their persistent ruts of thinking.

Creative Climate

Creating a physical, psychological, and social climate conducive to creativity is the final group technique for expanding creativity. Group members must avoid blocks to creativity and employ techniques that promote creative problem solving. They should themselves, and encourage others to, communicate freely; offer risk-taking opinions; probe and question, discuss, compare, and elaborate on ideas; engage in divergent rather

than convergent thinking; avoid win-lose competition; and engage in freewheeling and fantasy. Group members should also seek and maintain physical environments that are conducive to creativity.

From a social standpoint, they must attempt to minimize the enforcement of behavior norms that may block creativity. Emphasis should be placed on problem solving, working through conflict, and avoiding dysfunctional interpersonal conflict.

Finally, group members must learn to see themselves as a part of the group climate and promote creativity by ensuring that they are a model to others in heeding the above advice, avoiding barriers to creativity, and using special techniques to overcome creative blocks.

CONCLUSION

Research on creativity that shows ways in which it is inhibited and facilitated dispels the popular belief that creativity stems from inherited traits. On the contrary, each person has a capacity for creativity that, for a variety of reasons, is significantly underutilized. Understanding the nature of the barriers to creativity and practicing techniques to overcome them can be extremely beneficial to all of us. The key to promoting creativity is to expand our awareness and consciousness, to force ourselves to see the familiar in new and different ways—to make the familiar strange and the strange familiar (Bennis, 1975). The knowledge and techniques presented here can be useful in tapping the latent wellsprings of creativity in us all.

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■ A GUIDE TO PROBLEM SOLVING

Dean Elias and Paul David

Problem solving is a fundamental process that remains the same regardless of the type of problem. Of course, the complexity of the process changes with the nature of the problem.

CRITICAL VERSUS CREATIVE

Problem solving is, in many ways, simply a process of information management. Social scientists have discovered that one of the most significant barriers to effective problem solving is that people fail to make use of information that they already have. Like the computer, the brain consists of two components: a storage unit and a processing unit. Although the storage unit can hold a great amount of information, the capacity of the processing unit is quite limited. The average person can effectively manage no more than about seven independent variables of information at one time. When a problem begins to exceed this level of complexity, people overlook elements, perceive the wrong elements, or fail to make the right combinations of elements.

Another significant barrier to effective problem solving is that people often fail to use their creative faculties in searching for answers. The processing unit of the brain consists of both critical and imaginative functions. The critical function analyzes, compares, evaluates, and selects relevant information. The imaginative function generates, visualizes, abstracts, and foresees combinations of information. Both synthesize information, but the imaginative function creates ideas whereas the critical function delivers judgments. Both functions must operate mutually for successful problem solving.

For most people, judgment grows with age while creativity dwindles. The formation of adult habits and a critical self-image often limit creative abilities, while education and a career often promote the development of only judicial faculties. This overemphasis on judgment creates a tendency to see only the negative side of situations. In creative problem solving, one must turn off the critical function and use the imaginative function. Otherwise, premature judgment may limit creative possibilities or even eliminate any ideas that are generated.

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Systematic Creativity

Creativity is mental activity characterized by both subjective and objective thinking. It is a process of alternating back and forth between what we sense and what we know. A key to productive creativity is to control the alternation of subjective and objective thinking so that the critical and imaginative functions complement each other.

A DEFINITION OF PROBLEM SOLVING

Problem solving is creating change to bring actual conditions closer to conditions that are desired. A problem is a discrepancy between current conditions and desired conditions. A goal is a result that will reduce the discrepancy. There are two basic aspects of problem solving: *decision making* and *problem analysis*. Decision making consists of determining goals and choosing courses of action to reach those goals. Problem analysis consists of identifying factors that impede goal achievement and determining the forces that bear on those factors. The essential elements of planning depend on accurate problem analysis and shrewd decision making. These elements are determining whether a particular problem is significant, setting realistic goals, describing the major forces that affect the problem, and showing how a specific set of interventions can ameliorate the problem.

Major Premises

The steps in the problem-solving process are based on the following premises:

1. The most powerful action in problem solving is becoming more aware of the problem. This is the so-called paradox of change: Starting by trying to change conditions seems to exacerbate the problem, while accepting the full measure of the problem begins to solve it.
2. Problems have many causes, not just one. Every situation can be described as a field of forces—various psychological, social, political, economic, and cultural factors—held in dynamic balance. To produce change, we first must see clearly what forces are at work and how they are balanced. Then we must search pragmatically for the most effective place(s) to intervene in the field of forces in order to change the balance, rather than search for the one “cause” that seems most logical.
3. Valid decisions depend on adequate information. Adequate means accurate, clear, and complete. To draw an analogy, the recipe (process) depends on the ingredients (information).
4. Working with others can improve the process. A group of informed people working on a problem can compress into a few hours the mental work that might take months for only one person. In addition, the members of a group tend to risk more novel approaches than do individual people working by themselves.

5. Getting good results from a valid decision requires that those who must carry out the decision understand and be committed to it. A decision might be technically sound, but politically unreliable, or those who are responsible for implementing it may not be committed to or capable of doing so.
6. The “change agent” must develop a supportive environment:
 - a. The people who experience the problem should share authority for making any decisions for change.
 - b. The people who participate in the problem-solving process should have a trusting relationship and should communicate openly about the problem.

STEPS IN PROBLEM SOLVING

The problem-solving process is a cyclical feedback system. It is continual, with no real beginning or end; the completion of each step affects the definitions of the previous steps. These steps are depicted in Figure 1 on the next page.

1. Assess the Situation

Before launching a strategy for change, it is important to assess the problem in terms of whether action really is needed and whether it actually will have some impact on the problem.

To assess the situation, answer the following questions:

1. What is occurring that requires change?
2. What will result if nothing changes?
3. Can any significant change actually be effected?
4. Can the relevant information be obtained?
5. Does the situation deserve the effort (right now) compared with other priorities and interests?
6. Are the people involved in the situation committed to making a change?
7. At which step in the process should the effort begin?
 - To remove or reduce a deficient condition, begin with major step 2 and go through all of the steps.
 - To develop an improved strategy (rather than change a deficiency), begin with major step 5, although steps 3 and 4 can provide some useful tools.
 - If there is a plan of action that has not been tested or put into practice, begin with major step 7.
 - If a tested strategy simply has not been put into practice, begin with major step 10.

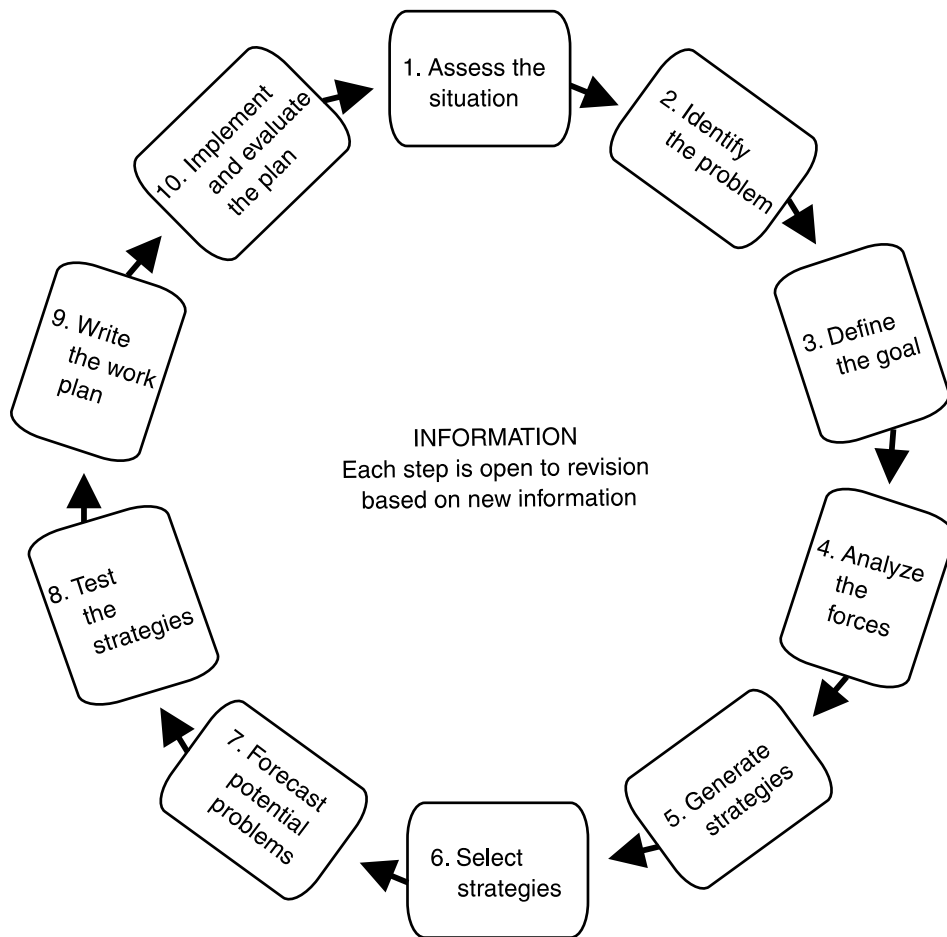


Figure 1. Cycle of Problem Solving

2. Identify the Problem

One of the most crucial and difficult steps in the process is identifying the actual problem. A problem usually is obscure, disguised, or locked inside some emotional distress, attitude conflict, or misleading outgrowth of another situation. Another major difficulty is in determining the standard by which a deficient condition is measured. Unless we are clear about our standards, we cannot be clear about our problems.

This step may take a long time and may include several revisions, but the effort is well spent. A problem that is well stated is half solved.

To identify the problem, answer the following questions:

1. What is specifically desired that is not happening? What are the standards or values that apply to the situation?
2. What is happening (described in objective and observable terms)?
 - Who is involved?
 - Where does it occur?

- When does it occur?
- What is the extent of the problem, that is, how many or how much?

Now the problem should be summarized in one comprehensive and concise statement.

3. Define the Goal

The definition of the goal is a statement of what is to be done about the problem. It should be expressed in measurable terms, that is, the results to be achieved in the form of observable and/or behavioral outcomes. Abstract or subjective statements of outcome are impossible to assess.

To define the goal (the desired conditions), define or answer the following:

1. Results—the outcomes expected:
 - What specifically is to result?
 - Who will be involved?
 - When will the result be achieved?
 - Where will the result occur?
2. Criteria—measures for acceptability:
 - What are the quantitative standards that indicate the minimum level of goal achievement?
 - What are the qualitative standards that indicate the minimum level of goal achievement?
3. Conditions—the perimeters of the effort:
 - What limitations or restrictions in terms of time and/or money are to be imposed?
 - What resources in terms of people and/or equipment are required?

Now the goal should be summarized in one comprehensive and concise statement, then checked to make sure that it describes an outcome rather than a strategy. It is important not to confuse ends with means at this point.

4. Analyze the Forces

This step is to collect, organize, and analyze all of the relevant information regarding the current situation as a foundation for creating a creative and realistic plan for change. At this point, it is very helpful to involve people who are familiar with the situation.

This step has two aspects: past circumstances that have influenced the formation of the problem and present factors (forces) that affect the achievement of the goal.

1. *Past Circumstances.* To have a clear picture of the circumstances from which the issue evolved, answer the following questions:

- What are the past decisions, occurrences, and factors that created the present problem situation?
- What was the context in which these circumstances occurred?
- Were any payoffs or benefits derived from these past decisions or actions? If so, what were they and who benefited from them?

2. *Present Factors (Force-Field Analysis)*. Force-field analysis, developed by Kurt Lewin (1951), is a tool for organizing and analyzing information as a basis for a change effort. Any situation can be considered as a dynamic balance of forces working in opposite directions. Forces moving toward change, helping forces, are opposed by an equal number of forces moving in the opposite direction, hindering forces. No change will take place in the situation unless an imbalance of these forces is created. The procedure involves identifying the problem, determining the goal that the group or person wishes to achieve, listing the helping forces and the hindering forces, and assessing each force in terms of its strength and vulnerability to change.

An important aspect of this procedure is brainstorming, a group process designed to produce a large number of ideas in a short period of time. While someone writes down what is said, the members of the group spontaneously and quickly express their ideas, more or less by free association. No comments or criticisms are permitted; anything and everything offered is noted. Each participant is encouraged to say whatever he or she wishes, no matter how unusual or unrealistic it may appear.

The Procedure

Summarize the problem in the middle of a sheet of newsprint. Summarize the goal on the right side of the sheet. Then use brainstorming to create a list of present helping forces, and enter these on the left half of the sheet. Make a similar list of present hindering forces on the right half of the sheet. Be as specific as possible.

The next step is to eliminate repetition and clarify items. Then, for each of the two lists, rate each item in terms of its strength, with the strongest being rated 10 and the rest rated on a scale of 1 to 10, compared with the strongest.

Next, for each of the two lists, rate each item with a strength of 5 or above in terms of how vulnerable it is to change efforts. Start by rating the easiest to change as 10; then weigh the other items on a scale of 1 to 10, in contrast to the easiest. This will provide a picture of how easily each force can be controlled or influenced.

Finally, identify and list the items for additional information as needed and proceed to obtain that information.

Once the analysis has been completed, alternative strategies for creating an imbalance—or creating change—can be developed. In general, this change can occur through any of the following alternatives:

- Changing the strength of any force;
- Changing the direction of any force;

- Withdrawing hindering forces; or
- Adding new helping forces.

It often is best to begin by working with hindering forces. Increasing helping forces often increases resistance. (It is a law of physics that every action has an equal and opposite reaction.) Strategies for change that are directed toward reducing hindering forces generally are more effective.

5. Generate Alternative Strategies

The first step is to review and revise the goal if the intervening steps have helped to clarify it. The next steps are quite unlike the systematic problem analysis. They require quite a different orientation—an openness to the absurd, spontaneous, and poetic resources of the preconscious. In these steps, creativity and invention are employed and logic and proportion are suspended.

1. *Fantasizing*. Attention is focused on the specifications of the goal and the people involved. For about two minutes, everyone fantasizes freely about a solution to the problem. The fantasies are then shared and compared to see what patterns are present as well as what elements are different from others.

2. *Brainstorming*. First considering those hindering forces that are strong and vulnerable, brainstorm actions to remove or minimize them. The process then is repeated with the helping forces that are strong and vulnerable. When ideas no longer flow freely, repetition is eliminated and statements are clarified.

3. *Synthesizing*. The list of items is synthesized by identifying logical combinations. All items that have an organic or logical connection (for example, credit checks or interest charges) are identified with the same letter. Each combination is then defined by a brief description of the strategy to be used; where appropriate, one or more are linked to provide more comprehensive possibilities.

6. Select the Best Strategy

This step uses a matrix to compare alternative strategies with decision-making criteria. This enables decision makers to be as precise as possible about the relative value of any one strategy or combination of strategies. There are two alternative procedures:

1. *Fixed-Criteria Procedure*. A “quick-and-dirty” distinction can be made by selecting the criteria of most benefit and least cost. Cost/benefit criteria are listed vertically, and alternative strategies are listed horizontally. Using the rating system employed in the force-field analysis, assign a value of 10 to the alternative with the highest benefit and lowest cost; then rate the others on a scale of 1 to 10. Select the alternatives with the best combinations of benefit and cost.

2. *Goal-Criteria Procedure*. Review the goal and identify each element that can be described as a criterion or measure. Segregate into two categories (IN/OUT and

WANTS) the criteria by which to measure alternatives. IN/OUT criteria represent minimum conditions that an alternative must satisfy to be considered further; in other words, alternatives meet these criteria or are tossed out. Alternatives that do meet minimum conditions are then evaluated by WANTS criteria, that is, which is preferable. The key measure is the comparison among the criteria. If the relative importance of the criteria listed under WANTS differs, assign each a weight of 10 and weigh each against that criterion using a scale of 1 to 10.

Screen out alternatives using the IN/OUT criteria; then compare the alternatives against each WANT criterion in turn, and assign a rating. Use the rating mechanism described previously. Multiply the *weight* for each criterion by the *rating* for each alternative. Compare the resulting scores.

If the alternative with the highest score has face validity, a tentative decision can be made. If it does not, the next-highest alternative should be reviewed.

7. Forecast Potential Problems

The next step is to test the feasibility of the selected course of action. Again, it will help if people who are involved, affected by, or have technical knowledge about the situation participate. Looking at the preferred course of action, carry out the following steps:

1. Brainstorm a list of things that could go wrong and list every idea.
2. Rate each potential problem in terms of *probability*. Using 10 as a rating for certainty, assign each item a score from 1 to 10.
3. For each item that received a rating of 5 or more (seems probable), rerate it in terms of *threat*. Using 10 as a rating for catastrophe, assign each item a score from 1 to 10.
4. For items with ratings of 4 or more on both scales, seek preventive actions; if you cannot prevent the problem, seek a contingency action to keep the problem from having a serious impact.
5. For an alternative with preventive or contingency actions, if no crippling potential problems seem likely, the preferred course of action should be sound.
6. If problems still seem likely, return to major step 6. Select another alternative and repeat the steps for forecasting and analyzing potential problems.

8. Test the Strategy

Before beginning to carry out any strategy for change, it is important to test the strategy. Testing may reveal more potential problems and also may clarify the extent to which the ability and commitment exist to carry out the strategy. The result in most instances is a refinement of the strategy that will increase its effectiveness.

The test to be used will be dictated by the nature of the strategy. If the strategy is interpersonal, role playing may suffice. If the strategy is technical (change in policy,

procedures, or methods), a brief trial period with a small number of people may suffice. The test should give some indication of the plan's feasibility.

9. Write a Work Plan

The next step is to develop a work plan that delineates the activities necessary to carry out the strategy. This should account not only for the activities that directly relate to implementing the strategy but also for any contingency to prevent potential problems. To complete this step, complete the following:

1. List all of the tasks required to carry out the selected course of action.
2. Order the tasks in chronological sequence.
3. Write a plan that (at minimum) accounts for the following:
 - Tasks—what needs to be done;
 - Primary responsibilities—who is going to carry out the tasks; and
 - Deadlines—when the tasks are going to be accomplished.

10. Implement and Evaluate the Plan

The process at this point may seem overwhelming. However, if the chosen strategy seems to be right, the following may help:

1. Act as if you can carry it out. Simply go ahead and do it.
2. Forgive and remember. If errors are made while the strategy is being carried out, forgive the lapse, remember the goal, and carry on.
3. Evaluate and revise. Be aware of the consequences of any action; if the plan is not progressing, either revise it or return to major step 1.

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■ STRESS, COMMUNICATION, AND ASSERTIVENESS: A FRAMEWORK FOR INTERPERSONAL PROBLEM SOLVING

Brent D. Ruben

In recent years countless books and articles have appeared on stress, assertiveness, and interpersonal communication. As interesting and popular as each concept is in its own right, the relationship among the three is even more intriguing, in terms of both theory and training.

STRESS

In very general terms, *stress* results when we are confronted by environmental threats or demands to which we cannot easily adjust. In such situations the body mobilizes itself to restore equilibrium. For most animals, stress is brought about by threats from the physical environment—an impending attack by a predator, a wound, or a loud noise. The response is a generalized physiological arousal. Neural, hormonal, and muscular reflexes are activated in preparation for the maximum physical output necessary for a fight or flight. Either action dissipates the physical and emotional energy (Seyle, 1976).

From a biological point of view, the stress-adjustment cycle of humans directly parallels that of other living systems. In terms of the origins of stress and the means available for dealing with it, however, humans are substantially unlike other animals, largely as a result of the role that symbols play in our lives. As humans, most of the stressors to which we strive to adapt are symbolic, rather than physical: the threat of rejection by a loved one, a heated argument with a colleague, the prospect of failure on an important exam, the tension of a long wait in line, or the pressure of an approaching project deadline. These symbolic threats are capable of triggering the same sorts of hormonal, muscular, and neural reactions that, for other animal species, are associated with physical threats.

Stress is, on the one hand, a very necessary and positive life force. It is the impetus for growth, change, and adaptation (Ruben, 1978). By adjusting to the demands of our physical and symbolic environments and to one another, we gain opportunities for personal and social growth, creativity, and discovery. On the other hand, chronic and accumulated stress can have devastating physical as well as emotional consequences. Research suggests that stress lowers our resistance to illness and can play a contributory

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role in diseases of the kidney, heart, and blood vessels; migraine and tension headaches; intestinal problems; asthma and allergies; respiratory diseases; arthritis; and even cancer.

COMMUNICATION

Communication has two important functions in the stress-adjustment cycle (Ruben, 1982). First, many of the stressors we face daily have their origins in the symbols and meanings we have created through communication. As we rush to be on time, strive for promotions, or anguish over relationships, we are essentially troubled over problems of our own creation. The concern with promptness, for example, is socially created and varies greatly from culture to culture, as does a preoccupation with success and achievement. Those who are disturbed by relationship problems are upset because it has been communicated to them that relationships are important and to be valued.

Second, communication is the primary means through which we deal with the various stressors we encounter. We have learned that physical combat and running away are simply not “civilized” ways of dealing with problems. We hold our bodies in check, and usually react by “fight” or “flight” in a symbolic sense only. Ironically, our complex society leads to an increase in stress factors, while it decreases the opportunities for coping with that stress physically.

Interpersonal communication is our primary means for coping with the stressors we encounter daily. Over the course of time, largely through force of habit, we have evolved particular strategies that we characteristically use in threatening circumstances. Two typical styles familiar to most of us are the *marshmallow* and the *machine gun* shown in Figure 1.

<u>Marshmallow Style</u>	<u>Machine-Gun Style</u>
Cautious	Reckless
Passive	Aggressive
Inhibited	Uninhibited
Controlled	Controlling
Submissive	Pushy
Dominated	Dominant
Uncomfortable	Insensitive

Figure 1. Two Typical Styles of Dealing with Stress

The Marshmallow Approach

Those who utilize a marshmallow approach to dealing with stress in interpersonal relations take the path of least resistance, choosing simply to go along or comply with the demands of others, regardless of how unreasonable or uncomfortable these demands may be. This approach is the behavioral enactment of the philosophy that there is no

value in “rocking the boat,” when instead one can put up with the uncomfortable or annoying circumstance or individual.

Those who use this approach opt for passive resignation and acceptance, often internalizing frustration, hostility, and anger. The marshmallow approach dictates that one give all outward signs of being accepting, comfortable, and cordial, even if seething with hostility and resentment inwardly. The “marshmallow” may feel helpless, taken advantage of, and victimized. Yet at the same time he or she may well be uncomfortable reacting in any other way for fear of endangering the other’s regard for him or her or jeopardizing what outwardly appears to be a stable, harmonious relationship.

The Machine-Gun Approach

Those who utilize a machine-gun approach to dealing with stress in interpersonal relations tend to say what is on their minds, regardless of the consequences. Unlike the marshmallow, the machine gun has no difficulty speaking up in public and in fact may be seen as highly verbal, outgoing, uninhibited, and—in extreme cases—insensitive, “pushy,” aggressive, threatening, dominant, or overpowering. Because of the forceful, even intimidating, way in which the machine gun approaches people and circumstances, others seldom make unreasonable demands of them.

A Comparison

The marshmallow is essentially *submissive*. The approach has advantages: It preserves surface harmony, and others appreciate the marshmallow’s willingness to comply with requests or meet demands. Disadvantages include: (a) stress and discomfort from continued internalization of feelings of hostility, frustration, and resentment; (b) perpetuation of the pattern of being taken advantage of; and (c) lack of self-respect or respect for others as a result of one’s vulnerability and continued abuse.

In contrast, the machine gun is *aggressive*. This style lets others know very clearly where one stands and what to expect. It also has disadvantages: Others with whom one might have meaningful relationships are often frightened away and may perceive the machine gun to be uninterested and self-centered. The consequences ultimately may be stressful for the machine gun.

Both the marshmallow and the machine-gun styles are dysfunctional as means of dealing with stress. The marshmallow steams on the inside while meeting the needs of others. The machine gun meets his or her needs by ventilating feelings, and, particularly in the short run, denies the needs of others.

The Assertive Response

Assertion theory (Bower & Bower, 1976; Kelley, 1979) provides a way of thinking about and dealing productively with stressful people, situations, and topics, avoiding many of the pitfalls of the machine-gun and marshmallow approaches, while benefiting from the care, sensitivity, and concern often characteristic of the marshmallow.

To use a similar metaphor, an assertive response can be seen as target shooting. Overall, the strategy of the target shooter is to conceive and aim messages purposefully, taking care to make the intended point clearly, logically, and without falling short of or overpowering the target. The target shooter makes an effort to separate issues from people.

The Target-Shooter Technique

The target-shooter technique consists essentially of five steps:

(1) introduction/transition; (2) statement of the problem; (3) explanation of feelings; (4) proposed solution; and (5) closure.

Introduction/Transition. The target shooter begins with an introductory or transitional comment that alerts the other person that there is something important to be discussed. An example might be: “Jim, do you have ten minutes? There’s something important I’d like to discuss with you.”

Statement of Problem. The target shooter then states the problem in simple, specific, nonemotional and nonjudgmental terms, presenting a newspaper-type account of the situation and explaining who, what, when, and where.

Explanation of Feelings. Following the statement of the problem, the target shooter indicates his or her own feelings about the situation, i.e., “troubled,” “concerned,” or “disturbed,” and why. The person avoids guessing at other people’s motives and states only personal feelings. Comments like “I am annoyed because you seem to be trying to take advantage of me” generally serve to make others defensive and have the net effect of moving the discussion farther from, rather than closer to, a positive resolution.

Proposed Solution. Next, a solution to the problem is proposed in specific and reasonable terms. Target shooters avoid asking for less than they can accept or more than others can reasonably give and then are specific enough so that everyone will easily be able to determine whether the proposed solution has been followed or not.

Closure. A statement of closure softens the climate and indicates satisfaction with the outcomes of the conversation. Depending on the circumstances and the relationship, the closing statement might be “Thank you for the time” or “I’m glad we had this talk; I’ve been bothered by these issues for some time.” Target shooters avoid the temptation for one last recrimination and do not enlarge the discussion at this stage.

A NEW MODEL FOR INTERPERSONAL PROBLEM SOLVING

Unfortunately, no single interpersonal strategy is likely to serve the wide-ranging needs of the individual in dealing with the many stressful situations he or she encounters. The great appeal of the target-shooter approach and other assertive approaches is their simplicity and promise of success. Ironically, these are also the major liabilities of these strategies. There is no doubt that assertive approaches do work very well in many

situations, but there are times when there is really no substitute for the humility, silence, and submissiveness of the marshmallow approach. There are even times when there is no useful alternative to the outward expression of extreme emotion so typical of the machine-gun approach.

To deal with a wide range of situations, what is needed (from a theoretical and training perspective) is an approach that (a) assumes the potential validity and value of a wide variety of interpersonal styles or strategies; (b) assumes that there is merit in learning the skills and metaskills necessary to use any of a number of different approaches; and (c) provides a framework for enabling the individual to select the approach that is most appropriate for the particular circumstances. One possible model for interpersonal problem solving for stress management (Ruben & Siegel, 1980) is presented in Figure 2 and described in the following paragraphs.

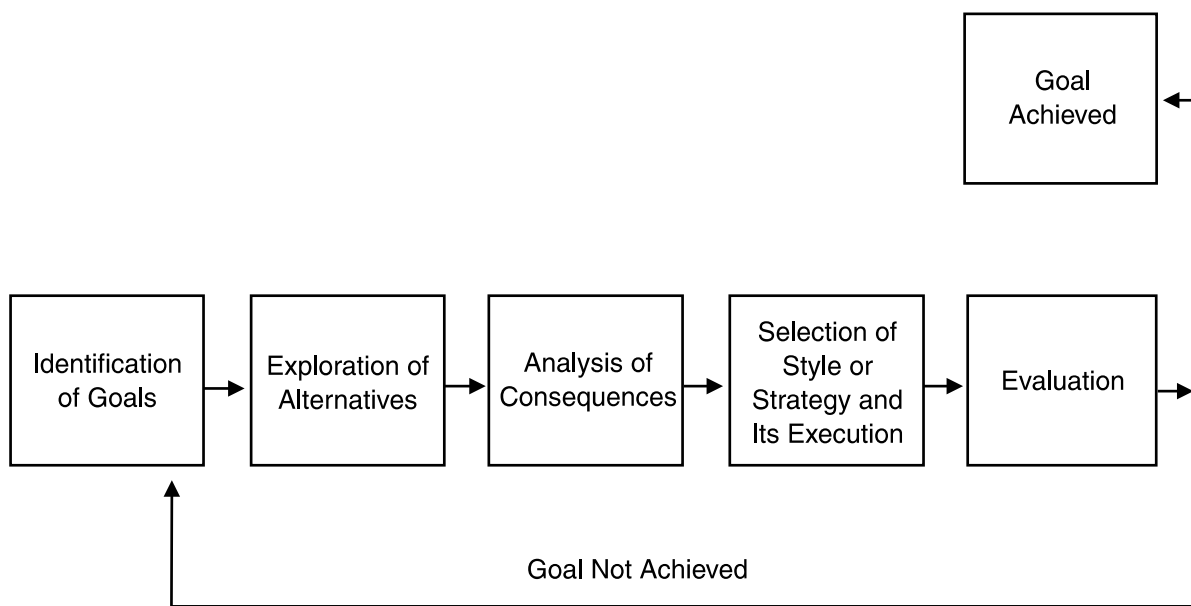


Figure 2. An Interpersonal Problem-Solving Model

Identification of Goals. One of the most difficult, yet most important, tasks to perform in stressful interpersonal situations is to identify goals. It is crucial to be clear as to one's goal or goals before trying to solve any interpersonal problem. The key question is "What do I want to accomplish?" It is critical to determine whether the primary goal is to (a) preserve the relationship; (b) express one's feelings; (c) put an end to the other person's requests or particular annoying habit; or (d) work toward some combination of these. The best way to handle any situation depends greatly on one's goal. If the goal is merely to preserve the relationship, the easiest approach is simply to comply with whatever requests are made. This is the marshmallow approach. If the goal is merely to rid oneself of frustration, the machine-gun approach is to mow down the opposition. If, however, one desires the relationship to develop into a healthier and more harmonious one, the goals might be to acknowledge the differences, the need for the various parties

to be true to themselves, and the need to approach the situation in a problem-solving way. Alternatives then can be explored in a less stressful and more productive way.

Exploration of Alternatives. After identifying one's goals—but before selecting an approach and embarking on a specific communication strategy—it is important to explore alternatives. Several possible options usually exist, such as: (a) accepting things as they are; (b) letting a situation go a while longer in the hope that it will work itself out; (c) using devious, indirect tactics; (d) using subtlety or sarcasm; or (e) confronting the issue directly. Each of these options may be viable and appropriate in certain circumstances, and it is useful to consider all possible options and their consequences rather than settling on one by default.

Analysis of Consequences. The alternatives can be compared by considering the possible consequences of each one. Ideally, an option with the maximum likelihood of producing positive gain and minimum likelihood of negative outcomes would then be chosen.

Selection of Style or Strategy and Its Execution. After the style for dealing with a situation has been selected, a specific plan of action must be developed and perhaps even scripted. What to say, when to say it, and how, are factors that need to be considered, as well as various possible responses from the other person. Then the strategy must be executed.

Evaluation. The last stage in the process is evaluating the effectiveness of the strategy chosen. Were the goals achieved? If so, the problem has been solved. If not, a recycling through the phases of the model is necessary—checking goals; exploring alternatives; analyzing consequences; selecting, developing, and executing a new strategy; and so on.

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■ ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT AND POWER

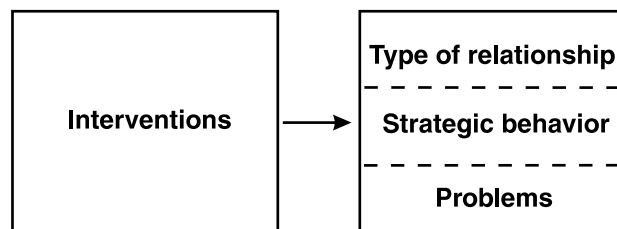
Willem F.G. Mastebroek

This article presents a theoretical approach to organizational interventions that combines traditional organization development (OD) strategies with one that also involves power, conflict, and competition for scarce resources. Four types of intraorganizational relationships are explored: (1) instrumental, (2) socioemotional, (3) power, and (4) negotiating. These four types of relationships reflect a view of organizations as networks of interdependent units. Each of these types of relationships produces problems and frictions within the organization. For each type of relationship and its ensuing problems, specific consultant-intervention tactics are recommended, each of which should be a part of an overall intervention strategy. The major element of this strategy is the “political” orientation of the consultant as he or she attempts to develop a coalition strong enough to implement a set of solutions in the client organization.

ORGANIZATIONS AS NETWORKS

Organizations are networks of units (individuals, groups, departments, and so on). Units are dependent on one another, but they also have their own interests. One could call each network a coalition of various interests. Units are bound to one another by relationships. Relationships between units are characterized by the dilemma of autonomy versus mutual dependence. This requires those concerned to find a balance between cooperative and competitive behavior.

The way in which one manages mutual relationships involves strategic behavior. Problems and frictions arise between units and can become chronic. These problems and frictions often are the reasons that OD consultants or human resource development (HRD) experts are called into the organization. Various relationships call for different types of strategic behavior and create various problems—problems that require specific interventions. A schematic of this relationship is shown below.



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FOUR TYPES OF RELATIONSHIPS

There are four primary aspects of the relationships between organizational units:

1. *Instrumental relationships*: People in organizations are regarded as means of production for one another. They use one another's accomplishments to help to achieve their own work goals.
2. *Socioemotional relationships*: People within organizations are emotionally involved with one another. This involvement may be oriented toward individual people in the form of sympathy or antagonism. It also can be group oriented in the form of positive or negative social identity.
3. *Negotiating relationships*: People in organizations must share many scarce resources with one another; in order to get one's share, one is dependent on others when decisions about resource allocations are made.
4. *Power relationships*: People in organizations determine, to some extent, the behavior of others; usually, people attempt to increase their own opportunities and to fortify their positions in relation to others.

Each type of relationship involves three dynamics for the OD or HRD practitioner: (1) which strategies are involved, (2) what problems and frictions are to be expected, and (3) what interventions can be applied.

Instrumental Relationships

Instrumental relationships always have received considerable attention in organizations. These concern the way in which work and tasks are organized. Division of labor and specialization make workers more or less dependent on one another. One can no longer produce without delegating work to an ever-increasing number of other people. In general, people tend to use rational strategies when managing this sort of relationship, for example, collecting information, determining the criteria that a solution must meet, or comparing alternative solutions. Preferably, quantitative information and methods are used. The approach is primarily rational, and a reasonably satisfying solution that permits work to continue is often sufficient. In Simon's (1957) terms, "satisfying" is often the objective, rather than "maximizing." In any case, personal interaction is of a different nature than when power relationships or scarce resources are in question. As March and Simon (1958) put it, the difference is between "bargaining" and "politics," on the one hand, and "problem solving" and "persuasion" on the other.

Problems in instrumental relationships are goal and task oriented. Problems are seen as "logical" rather than "political," and those concerned direct their behavior accordingly (Shull, Delbecq, & Cummings, 1970; Thompson, 1964; Thompson & Tuden, 1959). The problems can assume numerous forms: insufficient consensus about priorities, mutual misunderstandings, use of "different languages," lack of

communication skills, awkward procedures for dealing with problems, insufficient mutual exchange, obscure task assignments, poor coordinating structure, and so on.

Suitable interventions are of a rational, problem-solving nature, such as soliciting substantive advice from an expert. One can also deal with a transfer of insights and methods that facilitates seeking a solution in the areas of objectives and means, task division, and coordination (Kepner & Tregoe, 1965; Maier, 1963). Furthermore, consultants can be procedure oriented and recommend a systematic problem-solving model (Drucker, 1963). They can play a significant role in the various steps contained in such a model, for example, collecting information, formulating problems, and developing alternative solutions. Depending on the type of problem, consultants also can use more specific procedures, for example, strength/weakness analysis, Beckhard's (1969) confrontation meeting, the job-expectation technique, and the role-analysis technique (French & Bell, 1978; Huse, 1975).

Socioemotional Relationships

The human relations movement, with its attention on the informal organization, has focused attention on the socioemotional aspect of relationships. People in organizations affiliate themselves with one another on the basis of personal sympathies, similar norms and values, and mutual objectives. These emotionally loaded ties can engender a very strong “we” feeling. The informal groups that arise are often more meaningful to people than the more formal work relationships. The strategies that people use in these situations are clearly different from rational behavior. In a certain sense, they are even so irrational that the term strategy is no longer applicable. This is the area in which people pay attention to their “feelings.” In this area, there are greater chances for spontaneity, openness, and personal concern.

Problems arise in this area when personal or collective identity is challenged. Such problems are highly emotionally charged. They concern one's self-image, the prejudices related to this self-image, and questions of acceptance and trust. Feelings of affiliation and identification with certain groups, institutions, and symbols are questioned. Problems also can be related to how one manages personal relationships—how people approach and react to one another. This can produce strong negative feelings of suspicion and stereotyping.

After World War II, with the rise of laboratory training and organization development, socioemotional relationships were considered central to organization development. Feedback sessions, sensitivity training, and encounter groups became frequently used interventions (Beckhard, 1969; Bradford, Gibb, & Benne, 1964; Lippitt, Watson, & Westley, 1958; Miles, 1975; Schein & Bennis, 1965). More recently, however, enthusiasm for an intervention strategy exclusively oriented toward socioemotional relationships has waned (Bradford, 1974).

The two previously discussed groups of interventions are sometimes applied in combination. Usually, the accent is on the socioemotional side of relationships. Later, the focus is on the instrumental aspect: How can we increase organizational

effectiveness? Examples of such intervention strategies are Blake and Mouton's confrontation meeting, grid OD, and organizational mirroring (French & Bell, 1978; Huse, 1975). Both types of relationships, instrumental and socioemotional, play a central role in theories of leadership styles. The distinction between task orientation and socioemotional orientation is maintained in most variations. It is repeatedly emphasized that both aspects require separate attention and different kinds of behavior. Dealing with problems in these two sorts of relationships is probably the best developed of the OD strategies.

Negotiating Relationships

People in organizations also are bound together by having to share material resources such as space, salaries, budgets, personnel, and other facilities. In this regard, everyone is dependent on everyone else within the organization.

To the extent that resources are allotted on the basis of hierarchical decisions or clear criteria, these problems can be dealt with either as part of the power relationship or as instrumental issues. If this is not the case, then there is room for negotiation. Those concerned must meet to discuss a fair allocation of resources. Negotiating relationships can be characterized as follows:

1. Clear-cut interests of people or units are at issue, and these interests conflict with those of others.
2. Mutual dependence is also involved. (This is especially true in organizations in which a workable relationship between units must be maintained.)
3. There is a certain balance of power. (This is phrased as a "certain" balance because the parties need not be in equilibrium; but the more "out of balance" a party is, the less chance there is to effectively apply negotiation as a strategic behavior.)

The characteristics of negotiation as strategic behavior and the various problems related to it are discussed elsewhere (Mastenbroek, 1980). The most evident problems are as follows:

1. Impasses are normal.
2. The appearance of all sorts of negotiating styles, such as an open versus a closed style and a hard versus a relenting style, is accompanied by resulting emotional consequences.
3. Supporters may not be satisfied with anything but "winning."
4. Harder, more bitter negotiating, that is, an escalation toward more aggressive behavior, may develop.

The following interventions can be applied to negotiation situations:

1. Instead of striving for a solution based on extensive research, develop a provisional proposal, using it as a step toward compromise.

2. View impasses and crisis situations as natural—and sometimes even constructive—and use them as such.
3. Rather than defending one's own point of view or carefully prepared solution, encourage the parties to formulate the conditions on which they would be able to agree.
4. Make constructive use of deadlines.
5. Be sensitive to the constituency; cooperate in "selling" the results.
6. Function as discussion leader/chairperson in negotiations.
7. Limit the parties' opportunities to extend their arguments, directing the conversation to concrete proposals and conditions.
8. Actively take the role of mediator, knowing that one party can sometimes make concessions to a third party more easily than to the opponent.
9. Make regular use of adjournments.
10. If negotiations are stalemated, ensure that the parties explore the consequences of not reaching agreement.

Developing the negotiating skills of members of the organization can be a significant contribution. It is an alternative to the sometimes-forced attempt to have people "cooperate." Lack of openness and trust does not have to lead to unhealthy human relationships or a destructive atmosphere. Destructive tendencies can be avoided through negotiation. Mutual respect remains possible. Negotiation can even have a challenging, motivating effect. To deal with a negotiation situation, a consultant must be able to use a different style than if he or she were handling socioemotional problems or trying to establish a proper decision-making process.

Table 1 offers a summary of the situations discussed thus far.

Power Relationships

Mulder (1977, p. 15) defines the exercise of power as "determining, to a certain degree, the behavior of others or giving direction to the behavior of others." Power can be seen as a type of relationship or as an aspect of all human relationships. Formal position within a hierarchy or an arsenal of means of persuasion alone does not determine power relationships. Such things as expertise, credibility, and informal contacts also play a role. People within organizations usually have a very finely developed understanding of power relationships. They recognize that they are more or less dependent on those with more power and act on that basis.

The maintenance or strengthening of one's own strategic position in terms of these power positions is the motive for much behavior. Competing individuals and groups within organizations attempt to improve or safeguard their positions in relation to one another. One does this individually, sometimes by identifying with a given professional group or functional branch of the organization. One also can try to gain power by monopolizing and manipulating expertise of substantive interest to the organization. One

Table 1. Three Types of Organizational Relationships

Types of Relationships	Problems	Strategies	Consultant Interventions
Instrumental	Decision-making problems; difficulties in defining and coordination.	Rational/technical approaches; problem analysis, more efficient meeting and decision-making behavior, improved planning, clear division of tasks.	Teaching techniques of problem analysis and decision making; introducing better coordination and planning procedures.
Socioemotional	Lack of trust and acceptance; personal irritations; stereotyping.	Expression of “irrational” feelings and irritations; talking out matters, putting oneself in others’ shoes.	Training in open communication; discussing irritation and stereotyping
Negotiating	Continuing impasses; increasing pressure; escalation toward “fighting.”	Recognizing opposition; give-and-take instead of proving; exploring disadvantages of no compromise; keeping constituency at a distance.	Proposing compromise; training in negotiating techniques; chairing negotiations.

attempts to gain additional power by reorganization that allows one to achieve a more central position. The strategies used can be more specifically identified from case to case. Pettigrew (1973), for instance, lists some of the strategies used by specialists within organizations to secure their power vis-a-vis others. These usually are very cautious strategies—concealed behavior such as political maneuvers or power plays—aimed at maintaining and building status and prestige within the organization and consolidating and expanding one’s power position. Because it is also necessary to work together, the “power game” has a subtle and seldom-articulated character. In itself, it is also a power strategy because a blatant move to strengthen one’s power can undermine that very power.

Limitations of space prevent an adequate exposition of the frequently recurring power networks, such as equal-to-equal, higher-to-lower, and higher-to-middle-to-lower, which have been discussed elsewhere (Mastenbroek, 1982). But the specific interventions appropriate to resolve power-relationship problems are presented in Table 2, where they are contrasted to the appropriate strategies for the three other types of relationships. The important thing to recognize about the power-based interventions in Table 2 is that they require a strong advocacy position on the part of the consultant and are not usually regarded as traditional OD interventions.

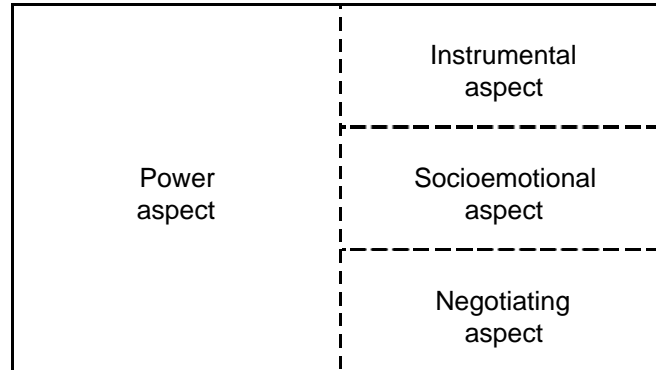
Table 2. Intervention Strategies for Four Types of Relationships

Power Relationships	Negotiating Relationships	Instrumental Relationships	Socioemotional Relationships
<p>Clarify the dynamics of power relationships, e.g., by simulation or analysis.</p> <p>Apply own power as expert or outsider.</p> <p>Press for influence from higher authority.</p> <p>Use structural measures such as developing power centers by reorganization.</p> <p>Forge a dominant coalition.</p> <p>Integrate units to modify existing power.</p> <p>Organize lower levels of the organization.</p> <p>Balance organizational units in size and power.</p> <p>Remove middle level or give it more authority</p> <p>Separate units in space.</p>	<p>Develop negotiating procedures with the parties: agenda, strategies to be pursued.</p> <p>Train in negotiating techniques.</p> <p>Assist parties in specifying conditions under which they can accept suggested solution.</p> <p>Chair the negotiations.</p> <p>Clarify common interests.</p> <p>Develop a compromise.</p> <p>Assist in selling the compromise to the constituency.</p>	<p>Teach techniques of problem analysis and decision making.</p> <p>Train people to meet efficiently.</p> <p>Introduce better coordination and planning procedures.</p> <p>Create clearer division of tasks.</p> <p>Use management by objectives.</p> <p>Assist in formulating policy and setting objectives.</p> <p>Interface management by introducing project groups or searching for and resolving barriers in the units' working relationships.</p>	<p>Train people in expressing emotions and irritations.</p> <p>Develop mutual trust and acceptance in teams (e.g., interpersonal process consultation.)</p> <p>As third party, set rules and procedures for managing personal conflicts.</p> <p>As third party, reduce distrust and irritation between departments (e.g., confrontation meeting).</p> <p>Reinforce unit's identity (through greater autonomy, "house style").</p>

THE ONE-ON-THREE MODEL

The four types of relationships are not equal. The power relationships usually are much more important than the other three in organizational life. Power relationships determine behavior to a large extent. Much power behavior is termed "political," although it is often disguised. In effect, power relations recondition the other three aspects of interunit relations. The concern of OD practitioners with socioemotional and, to a lesser extent, instrumental problems often presupposes a certain balance of power and a highly developed interdependence between units. Such a balance, however, may not be present.

The one-on-three model of interunit relations is as follows:



This theory of intervention covers more problem areas than does traditional organization development. What is still lacking is an intervention strategy, that is, a model in which individual interventions can be integrated into a total intervention program. Three basic steps in this strategy are the following:

1. Identification of the problem (by surveying the different perspectives of the problem);
2. Development of a dominant coalition;
3. Solution of the problem with the help of the one-on-three model.

An important point of this strategy is that in order to realize and implement a solution, consultants need a dominant coalition. They must take the political structure of the organization into account when trying to find a formula that will bring about such a decisive combination. When such a coalition does not exist, a principal role of the consultant is to develop such a coalition. The consultant must enter the political arena of the organization and use his or her power to develop adequate support to make certain that the interventions will produce the change in the power relationships. This would be a clear case of “fighting fire with fire.” This overall strategy is a very different one from the more external stance taken in traditional OD interventions. Here the consultants use their power to realign the power relationships within the organization in order to help the organization to reach its desired level of effectiveness.

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■ A CREATIVE PROBLEM-SOLVING TECHNIQUE

Jean E. Latting

Managers traditionally have assumed the superiority of rational, problem-solving approaches in which component parts of a subject are systematically combined to form a coherent whole. Scholars now suggest, however, that rational problem solving utilizes only half of a person's full problem-solving potential (Cates, 1979; Ornstein, 1972). Although sentient ability or intuition—the ability to feel and sense without specific external clues—is considered important for helping professionals (Goldstein, 1976), training in empathy, intuition, sensitivity, or acceptance generally is neglected in workshops on problem solving. Such workshops usually emphasize analytic and rational thinking, exemplified by management tools such as the program evaluation and review technique (PERT) and management by objectives (MBO). Although all of us are empathic and intuitive at times, many managers seem to be uncomfortable in acting on their feelings about a problem.

HEMISPHERIC DOMINANCE AND INFORMATION PROCESSING

Recent discoveries about the neurophysiology of information processing have relevance to problem solving and decision making. By now, most of us are aware that the cerebral cortex of the brain is divided into two hemispheres that process information differently. The left cerebral hemisphere “thinks” analytically and specializes in verbal and mathematical functions. It deals with inputs one at a time and organizes information in a linear, sequential fashion. The right hemisphere “intuits” information from a variety of inputs all at once. The right hemisphere is responsible for spatial orientation, artistic and musical ability, crafts, body image, and recognition of faces. It “thinks” using visual imagery, creative synthesis, intuition, fantasy, and associative processes.

Profoundly creative people reportedly use both hemispheres. Albert Einstein, for example, relied on geometric mental images rather than language for his analyses. Kekule formulated theory after experiencing a vision in which he saw atoms pairing together to form a molecule “whilst the whole kept whirling in a giddy dance” (West, 1975–76). Kurt Lewin had flashes of creative insight: “The most trivial experience, the most casual comment, might spark a thought in Lewin’s model that would result in a new theoretical breakthrough in the social psychology of groups and interpersonal relations” (Johnson & Johnson, 1975).

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West (1975–76) postulates that profoundly creative people are exceptional only in that they have learned to pay attention to, rather than ignore, their insights, visions, and altered states of consciousness. Their insights then are subjected to rigorous testing and evaluation (left-hemisphere functions). Thus, a balance between the two hemispheres, rather than dominance by one over the other, may be the key to creativity.

Rational problem solving, as it usually is taught, involves a process of reasoning that occurs primarily in the left hemisphere of the brain. However, nonrational factors in analysis and decision making have been considered recently in organization and management development. Many group training techniques are designed to “open up” people to sublimated, uncensored data. Among the most familiar are brainstorming (Pfeiffer & Jones, 1971) and the nominal group technique (Ford, 1975). Centering methods such as T'ai Chi Chuan (Banet, 1980), Zen, meditation, and Silva mind control (Silva & Miele, 1977), all primarily of Eastern origin, have become popular as methods for “getting in touch with our inner selves”; but these methods usually are adopted on an ad hoc basis. The rational model still remains the most widely used.

THE RATIONAL PROBLEM-SOLVING METHOD

The rational problem-solving method typically includes the following steps:

1. Definition of the problem;
2. Definition of the criteria (or objectives) for solution of the problem;
3. Identification of alternative courses of action;
4. Evaluation of the alternatives against the criteria; and
5. Identification, implementation, and monitoring of a preferred course of action.

The importance of specifying the criteria has been described by Likert and Likert (1978).

Kepner and Tregoe (1965) have popularized a variation of this model in which decisions about possible courses of actions are based on mathematical weights and scores. Although valuable in forcing managers to state explicitly their criteria for decision making, this method tends to let numerical data determine the decision outcome. Somewhat more elaborate than the basic, rational, problem-solving method, the Kepner-Tregoe method includes the following steps:

1. Definition of the objectives of the decision to be made. (These objectives serve as the criteria for assessing alternatives.)
2. Classification of the objectives according to their importance. (“MUSTS,” or criteria that cannot be compromised, and “WANTS,” or criteria that are desired but may be traded off. “WANTS” are weighted on a numerical scale of one [low] to ten [high].)
3. Identification of alternative courses of action.

4. Evaluation of alternative actions in terms of the objectives. (Alternatives that do not fit the “MUST” category are eliminated. The remaining alternatives are assessed one by one on a scale of one to ten against each objective until all alternatives have received a score with respect to each objective. The relative worth of each alternative is determined by multiplying the weight received by each objective [step 2] against the score given to each alternative for that objective [step 4]. The weighted scores for each alternative are summed, producing a total weighted score for each of the alternatives.)
5. Selection of the alternative that receives the best score as the tentative decision.
6. Identification and assessment of potentially adverse consequences of the tentative decision. (If serious, the possible adverse consequences of all the alternatives are listed and weighted on a scale of one to ten. The weighted consequences are then multiplied by a similarly weighted score measuring the seriousness of the consequence. The total weighted score supporting each alternative [step 4] is assessed against the total weighted score of possible negative consequences. The results either confirm the tentative decision or lead to a new choice.)
7. Implementation of the decision with careful monitoring and follow-up of possible negative consequences. (Preventive actions should be taken to minimize the negative consequences, and contingency plans should be developed for negative consequences that cannot be averted.)

THE CREATIVE PROBLEM-SOLVING PROCESS

In the creative problem-solving technique presented here, the tallied scores are a stimulus, rather than the sole criteria, for a decision. The numerical data help to surface previously suppressed desires and feelings.

A Case Illustration

A colleague recently had entered into a joint professional practice with a man with whom she also had a personal relationship. At the time we spoke, the two were deciding whether to incorporate their now flourishing practice or to continue to work as a partnership. The question had arisen because they planned to purchase a house together to use as an office. He was in favor of incorporating; she was ambivalent. Although she was sure that their work would be successful as long as they maintained their personal relationship, she feared the impact of a breakup. She also was uncertain whether incorporation would increase or decrease her tax benefits. Lastly, she recently had purchased extensive personal and professional liability insurance and was not greatly concerned about the impact of a lawsuit.

Our first task was to clarify her two major objectives: (a) to maximize her tax advantages and (b) to minimize relationship and professional trauma. After her

accountant had delineated her tax options and their monetary advantages and disadvantages, we prepared a matrix with her alternatives listed across the top and her criteria down the first column (see Table 1).

Table 1. A Problem-Solving Matrix with Weights, Scores, and Weighted Scores

Criteria	Weight	Partnership Score (Weighted Score)	Incorporation Score (Weighted Score)
Tax advantages	8	5 (40)	9 (72)
Monetary flexibility	7	8 (56)	10 (70)
Status	6	7 (42)	10 (60)
Personal liability	5	5 (25)	10 (50)
Positive impact on professional relationship	10	5 (50)	5 (50)
Positive impact on personal relationship	8	10 (80)	5 (40)
Positive impact on partner	9	4 (36)	10 (90)
Ease in amending decision	7	9 (63)	6 (42)
Feeling free, not trapped	10	9 (90)	0 (0)
Ease of bookkeeping	10	4 (40)	0 (0)
		522	474

Simply listing the criteria brought the nature of the conflict into focus. Five addressed professional/personal issues: the possible tax advantage, flexibility in how their joint income was dispersed and invested, status considerations, minimization of personal liability, and the potential impact on their professional relationship. The other four addressed personal concerns: the impact of her decision on their personal relationship and on her partner, the ease with which she could amend the decision (i.e., dissolve the corporation or partnership), and the extent to which she would feel free or trapped in a permanent arrangement. Almost as an afterthought, she added that they both hated to do bookkeeping, although she did know how to do it.

No attempt was made to eliminate overlap among the criteria. For example, “impact on personal relationship” and “impact on partner” were listed separately although they were concerned with similar feelings. Care was taken to word all criteria in the same direction so that the higher the weight, the more positive the criterion. For example, although she did not want to feel trapped, this was written as “feeling free, not trapped.”

The next step was to weight the criteria in terms of their importance to her on a scale of one to ten. Her greatest surprise was that she did *not* give “tax advantages” a ten. The importance of permitting overlapping criteria was revealed in her decision to weight the impact on her partner higher than the impact on their personal relationship. This choice was explained by the “10” weight she gave to “impact on professional relationship”; she did want to keep working together because their work was so

effective. She also was amazed to realize that her greater concern was with her *perception* of feeling free or trapped (weight of “10”), rather than with how difficult it might be to dissolve a written legal agreement (weight of “7”).

When she scored each of the alternatives in terms of the criteria, she did not perceive that incorporation provided her with a significantly greater tax advantage than did her currently allowable tax deductions.

The last stage of the mathematical process was to multiply the weights times the scores and to sum the weighted scores for the two alternatives. When incorporation lost to partnership by 522 to 474, my colleague was noticeably relieved. Then she said “But the totals are really close.” I urged her to play with the numbers—to alter weights and scores or to add or delete criteria. After doing this briefly, she noted that incorporation won if only professional and monetary factors were considered, but lost overall because of her personal concerns. The importance of her feelings in regard to the problem-solving process was thus reinforced.

My colleague then presented her decision to her partner, not as final, but as a statement of where she was at that time. She also decided to investigate a compromise option: having a written partnership agreement. She always had the option to reevaluate the decision not to incorporate after she had dealt with the source of her ambivalence about her partner.

An important point made by this case is that feelings and intuition can operate in apparent contradiction to rational thoughts. Although my colleague eventually might have examined her intuitive concerns if we had simply talked about the advantages and disadvantages of incorporating, the problem-solving technique helped her to label and prioritize each concern, thus facilitating insight in a remarkably short period of time.

Creative Problem Solving and Creativity

Four stages of the creative process are generally recognized (Guilford, 1967). The first stage involves “mental labor”—collection of data. In the second stage, data “incubates,” and conscious thought about the problem is suppressed. This stage permits intuitive processes to occur. In the third stage, “illumination,” the problem is solved in a burst of insight. Finally, evaluation, revision, verification, and elaboration of the solution occur.

The creative problem-solving technique presented here encourages each of these four stages. During the first stage, the problem is identified and data is collected. During construction of the matrix and allocation of weights, a brief but intense period of incubation occurs. Judgment is suppressed as participants anticipate an impending solution. The third stage, illumination, occurs immediately after the final tally. The intuitive knowledge of a preferred action (what feels right) is revealed as new data and is given credence by the logic of lists and numbers.

The fourth stage is enabled by the suggestion that the participant play with the numbers in order to convince the rational hemisphere that what is wanted is also logically superior. Prompting questions such as “Why did you prefer this alternative?” help in this stage.

Many participants who are using this technique for the first time doubt both the figures and their immediate feelings of relief about the outcome. By playing with the numbers—manipulating the weightings—they seek to make a lesser choice more prominent. In all the years in which I have administered this technique, this ploy never has worked. Once a sublimated choice wins, it invariably remains the winner.

Occasionally, the final totals indicate a choice that is not secretly desired. This usually indicates serious disassociation between right and left hemispheric awareness of the problem, which intensifies the difficulty in resolving the conflict. In one instance, a rather diffident manager was torn between confronting his boss on an important matter and other, less threatening alternatives. When the tally suggested that he not confront his boss, he was clearly unhappy. After reexamining the figures, to his relief, he decided that he had grossly underestimated the weights of several of his criteria and had omitted others. After he recalculated, his secretly preferred choice, direct confrontation, won. This reevaluation is “allowed” because both the criteria and the weights are the products of the participant’s judgment, and he or she has the right to admit new evidence (feelings) into the judgment.

A Model for Creative Problem Solving

The problem-solving technique presented here is relatively simple and has been used to help administrators, practitioners, and students decide among career directions, identify appropriate methods for implementing new projects, resolve budget problems, and make numerous other personal and professional decisions. One of the values of the technique is the relatively brief period of time required to choose among alternatives. Other techniques that require some training and more time in their development also may be used to balance rational with intuitive information. Figure 1 depicts a model of the creative problem-solving process.

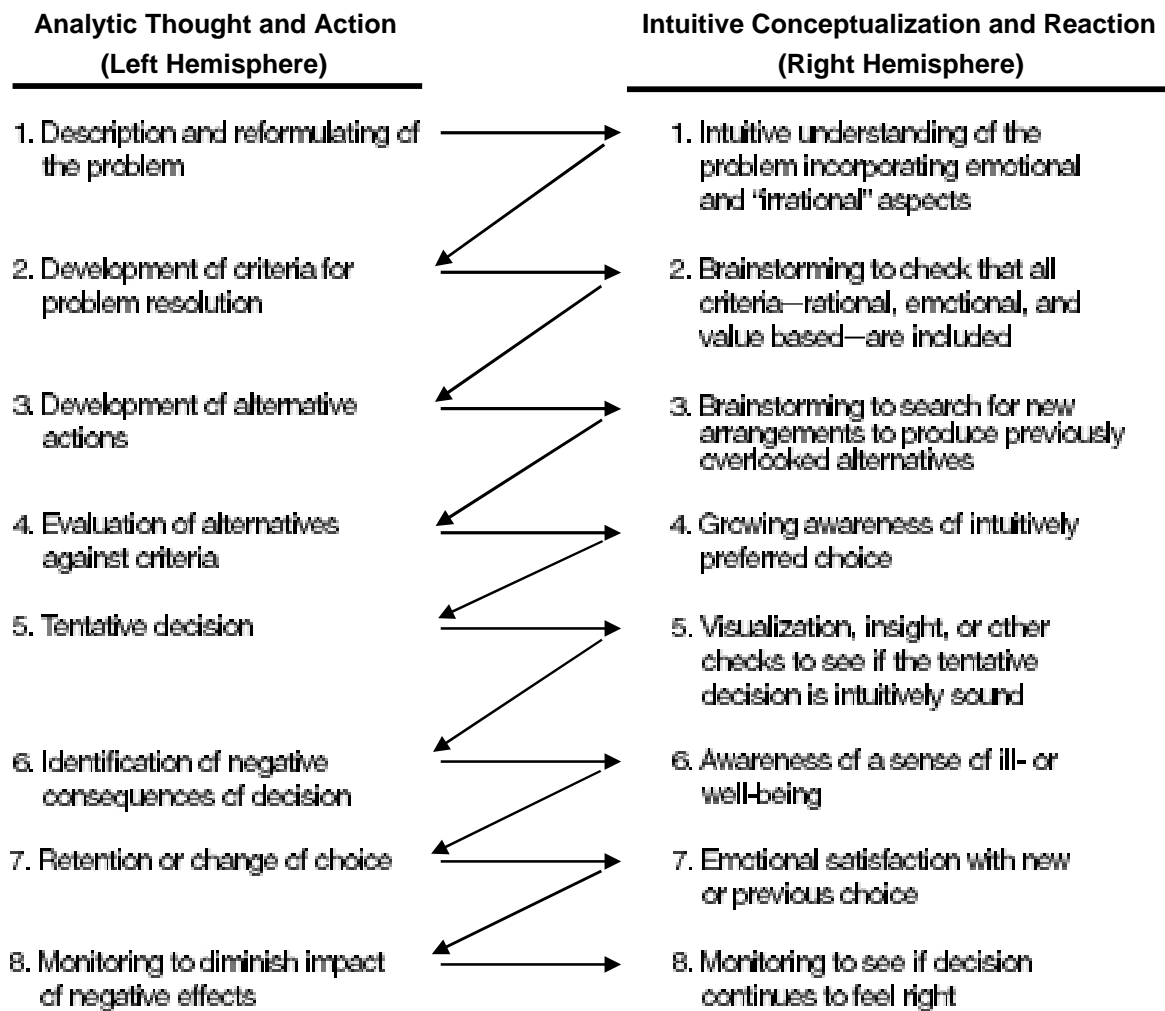


Figure 1. The Creative Problem-Solving Process

CONCLUSION

Most professionals face a daily barrage of information that must be codified, manipulated, and finally reconstituted in the form of decisions and actions. Many people have been conditioned to believe in the superiority of logical and analytical processes and do not trust emotional, intuitive, or value-based processing of information.

The creative problemsolving technique presented in this paper enables reconciliation of logic with intuition, facts with emotions. A personal preference for or against a particular decision is used as data to be explored and reconciled, rather than as an irrational intrusion. The creative problem solver:

1. Tempers rational thought with emotional-intuitive preferences.
2. Uses “opening up” techniques to bring sublimated data about a situation into awareness.
3. Avoids censorship of ideas during their generation.

4. Views divergent, even contradictory, ideas with respect rather than with skepticism or defensiveness.
5. Never ignores internal warnings that something is wrong.
6. Checks any rational problem-solving method to see whether it feels intuitively good in process and in the final decision.
7. Remains constantly self-aware.

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■ LOGS: A LANGUAGE OF GROUP SKILLS

Reg Herman

LOGS (a language of group skills) is a common language for problem-solving and decision-making groups. It identifies and defines a core repertoire of six collaborative skills, each of which presents a new approach to and fresh insights into cooperative group processes. The two major ideas that inspired the six years of research behind LOGS are as follows:

1. Possession of a *common language* is crucial in raising the level of collaborative group performance.
2. Through a process called “naming the learning,” groups use LOGS for *self-intervention*. Naming the learning for self-intervention is a collaborative act, generalizing from the group’s own data for its continuing learning and development. Group self-intervention is an extension of the process critique used in organization development and the self-directed learning used in adult education.

THE PROBLEM

One focus in using LOGS has to do with the difference between what groups are and what they could be—using collaborative and creative skills for problem solving and decision making. One of the most frustrating aspects of working in groups is that so many of them do not function cooperatively. Typically, group problems are broken into individual tasks, primarily because people do not know how to function in any other way. Thus, the individual members of a group need new skills that many of them have never learned. Reed (1978, p. 42) points out that “There are special decision-making problems associated with groups.... Unfortunately, most of the small-group research over the past fifty years has been concentrated on quantifying problems of the individual group member.”

The six elements of LOGS are *group* skills, as opposed to individual role functions. As LOGS research groups identified the basic competencies that groups need, they sought to encode them in a vocabulary that could become a common language of cooperative skills in the group.

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The Power of a Common Language

The importance of a common language in problem-solving groups is defined in a case study of training in industry (Thomas, Beatty, Herman, & Weyman, 1978). A manager for Bell Canada, which has about 28,000 employees in Ontario, was responsible for conducting problem-solving workshops across departmental lines. The purpose of the workshops was to teach problem-solving skills to supervisors. “Probably the best thing that comes out of these workshops,” the manager said, “is that these people learn a common language—it happens to be the language of training—and they finally discover what the others are talking about.”

The evidence mounted for the enabling function of a common language in furnishing the means of cooperative problem solving and decision making in groups. One of the clearest examples was Robert Melcher’s (1969) construction of a language of role clarification and accountability for organizational intervention. He called it the Management Responsibility Guide (MRG); its purpose was to provide a tool for structural change that identified over control, under control and holes of accountability, and so on. The impact of MRG went beyond role clarification and structural change: As the groups learned the concise language, Melcher and his former partner, David Jamieson (1976), found that they were welding teams. Of course, the participants were accepting mutual roles as well as learning a common language—but the language became their instrument for checking their own collaborative processes.

Further insight into the function of a common language came from a study of airplane-pilot training (Herman, 1980). Pilot crews of each type of aircraft learn a common language. Two points emerged from the study:

1. The language arises *from* the skills and is inextricably linked to them; therefore, it is jargon proof.
2. Pilots from different airlines are trained for the same type of aircraft in the same simulators, yet the procedures and language are different for each company. For example, a check may be accompanied by the response “switch on” in one airline and “switch off” in another. It therefore is important to develop a common language within the training teams, and the language must evolve from their own vocabularies.

These learnings apply to each LOGS group. The group does not have to be cohesive; but it must respect and seek to make use of the opinions, knowledge, and expertise of *every* member.

The Target Groups

The basic tenet of LOGS is that a common language of group skills will facilitate collaborative performance and team identity. Thus, a goal of the group is to identify and define the cooperative skills in the group, particularly cooperative problem-solving and decision-making skills. LOGS primarily is designed for management and work groups,

task forces, learning and community groups, committees, interdisciplinary teams, and quality circles.

THE LANGUAGE OF GROUP SKILLS (LOGS)

LOGS One: The Goals of the Meeting Are Posted

The goals of the group meeting must be clear to all members at the beginning of the session. The things to be learned by group members as part of LOGS One are as follows:

1. To build in evaluation by writing goal statements in terms of observable behaviors, so that at the end of the meeting, the members can evaluate what happened in light of the goal statement(s).
2. That an agenda is *not* a statement of goals. The distinction between the goals or expected outcomes of a meeting and its agenda becomes clear to group members the moment they see the goal statement(s) *above* the agenda or posted separately. The agenda is the vehicle by which the group meets its goals.
3. To allocate sufficient time at the beginning of the session for thorough clarification of the goals and any changes that are heeded to ensure agreement among the group members.

The literature on groups gives evidence of the effect of goal clarity on commitment and performance (Knowles, 1969). As will be discussed later, one of the responsibilities of a group is vigilant processing of information (Janis & Mann, 1977), a purpose of which is to tap *all* of the resources within the group. However, group members are not useful resources if they are confused about or have different perceptions of the goals of the meeting. Even if some of the members are not entirely satisfied with the goal statement, the fact that an effort has been made to attain common understanding has a positive effect in bringing the group together, a first step toward *cooperative* work.

LOGS Two: Clarify the Terms and the Problem

There are two distinct but interrelated difficulties that LOGS Two brings to the attention of groups. The first is the tendency of many groups to search for a solution before defining the problem. The second is the way in which professional jargon and clichés can hinder efforts to define the problem, especially if the jargon and clichés assume knowledge, attitudes, or priorities that are not actually shared by all members. In a common effort to clarify their terms for one another, members often discover a new willingness to try to understand one another's problems. This willingness to try to understand may not eliminate disagreements, but it does create the possibility of working toward win-win decisions. Robert Mager's *Goal Analysis* (1972) also draws attention to the profusion of inexplicit terms and clichés in our everyday language. Although many problem-solving strategies warn against premature solutions (DeBono,

1972; Doyle & Straus, 1980; Gordon & Poze, 1976), most of them fail to take into consideration the likelihood that the problem statement will be couched in inexplicit language. The solution is to define all terms being used to the agreed understanding of all members. For example, “to improve communication” is a common and very nebulous goal. It is more realistic to set goals in terms of one step or skill at a time, for example, “to focus on listening skills by having each group member summarize the discussion.”

LOGS Three: Every Meeting Begins with a Getting-Acquainted, Warmup, or Climate-Setting Activity

In the first LOGS research groups, getting-acquainted and climate-setting activities were conducted for a few sessions and then dropped. Survey instruments revealed positive change in terms of enthusiasm and commitment. However, at the end of the program, process critiques produced a different message: At the end of over fifty hours of group experience, sixteen participants discovered that they still did not know—or care that they did not know—one another’s last names, life or work experiences, group expertise, and knowledge levels.

Four conclusions appeared possible:

1. The instruments, which had indicated increased openness, trust, and commitment, were measuring irrelevant variables.
2. Ice breakers, or getting-acquainted and warmup activities, are a waste of time and change nothing.
3. The particular methods employed in the research groups were inept. They may not have been as relevant as they might have been and were not followed by process analyses.
4. Getting acquainted and establishing a cooperative climate are processes that a group must work on continually.

As a consequence of the first failures, LOGS researchers conducted more intensive assessments of the information that members had about one another’s experiences and skills and made the unsettling discovery that one or two climate-setting activities are totally inadequate to achieve major or enduring change.

The Purposes of Climate Setting

Getting-acquainted, warmup, or climate-setting activities must be related to the goals of the session and must provide time for process analysis—for the group members to generalize and record what they have learned and what they will do with it. (All learning experiences should include time for “naming the learning.”)

Given LOGS’ focus on cooperative problem-solving and decision-making skills, the central purpose of climate setting is to establish these conditions in the group:

1. All members share responsibility for everything that goes on (for example, welcoming and orienting new members).
2. All members know of and use one another's knowledge and experience, regardless of status. In their definition of a team, Reilly and Jones (1974) call this condition "interdependence." This means that climate setting should establish a social environment in which any member can tap all of the resources within the group.
3. The atmosphere provides for the inclusion of all members in the process critique for self-intervention and creative change.

To accomplish these goals, a group must incorporate climate-setting activities into *every session*, unless the group members explicitly decide that it no longer is necessary. Even then, the group should feel free to initiate climate-setting experiences when they are needed.

LOGS Four: Using Conflict To Preserve Ideas

The constructive use of conflict is an attractive concept to most groups; however, most groups have become so adept at suppressing conflict that they do not know how to utilize it when they experience it.

The view of conflict in LOGS groups is as follows:

1. Conflicts that are not engaged kill ideas.
2. Groups that do not deal with their conflicts fail to welcome divergent views.
3. Suppressed conflicts emerge in other destructive forms.

A group that is committed to using all of its resources to find the best available decisions cannot indulge in flight from disagreements.

LOGS groups first identify the *major methods of avoiding conflict*; once they have named several such techniques, noticing the variations is easy. The following are the three chief conflict-avoidance techniques:

1. *Declare the Conflict To Be Out of Order.* This is the most obvious strategy of the three and the most difficult to deal with. The chairperson suppresses any controversy by ruling that the present situation is not the appropriate time to deal with the issue and tables the issue for discussion at a later time. The later time is not designated, of course. A group must be unusually alert and strong to forestall this strategy.

2. *Change the Subject.* If Machiavelli found himself in a modern group, this would be his favorite tactic: Kill a proposal, not by attacking it, but by ignoring it and introducing a totally unrelated idea. Generally, the next speaker will quite innocently take the cue and add a third idea. The limits of short-term memory will finish the job. This strategy is subtle; even the motive is covert. Group members must be alert in order to detect it.

3. *Deflect the Conflict with Humor.* The humorous interjection probably is the most damaging technique for smoothing over conflict and the most difficult to identify. It diverts attention, increasing the likelihood of losing the idea. Humor catches people off guard; few are aware of the use of humor to avoid conflict when it occurs. The group member who draws attention to its use as a mechanism to divert the discussion is likely to be challenged with a comment such as “Where is your sense of humor?” Also, because humor and creativity are based on making new connections (Adams, 1979), the use of humor may indicate to a problem-solving group that it is working creatively rather than escaping from conflict or eliminating ideas.

LOGS Five: Consensus (Silence Is Not Assent)

In LOGS there are four reasons for seeking consensus:

1. Consensus ensures commitment to the ultimate decision on the part of all members.
2. A win-win attitude replaces the win-lose mentality of the voting method.
3. Consensus raises the quality of decision making, reducing error and contributing to synergy.
4. Consensus increases the group’s awareness of self-intervention, helping it to take responsibility for ongoing change.

Three difficulties plague consensus-seeking groups. First, the term “consensus” has become jargon; and, as LOGS Two suggests, one of the worst effects of jargon is the mistaken assumption that everyone understands it. Many groups fail to define consensus and try to achieve a standard of agreement on which the members have no agreement. The second problem is that many groups think that they must seek consensus and proceed to force a “consensus” that is fictitious by any definition. A common excuse is the pressure of time, but false consensus invites “groupthink”—the tendency to agree for the sake of appearing agreeable. The third difficulty in achieving consensus is silent members. Consensus cannot be claimed in the presence of silent members; silence is not assent. Silent members indicate that the group has not tapped all of its resources. LOGS denies the right of members to remain silent.

A Definition of Consensus

LOGS uses the definition of consensus offered by Schein (1969):

If there is a clear alternative which most members subscribe to, and if those who oppose it feel they have had their chance to influence (the decision), then a consensus exists. Operationally it would be defined by the fact that those members who would not take the majority alternative, nevertheless understand it clearly and are prepared to support it. (p. 56)

Schein then adds the following criterion: In order to achieve such a condition (consensual support), time must be allowed by the group for all members to state their

opposition and to state it fully enough to get the feeling that others really do understand them.

LOGS adds the concern that the group demand more of itself than “allowing time”; it must welcome dissident views as an antidote to groupthink. The objective is vigilant decision making; to meet it, the criterion becomes “Members must conduct a proactive search for *all* of the information and opinions available in the group.”

The Goals of Consensus Seeking

Following are the goals of consensus seeking:

Commitment. Consensus is vital for any decision that must be supported by all members of the group, even the dissenting members.

Win-Win. This goal is to eliminate the win-lose effect of majority rule. Voting is quick, but opposing members are labeled losers or pushed into an adversarial role, inviting sabotage of the decision. No group concerned with cooperative problem solving and decision making can afford this damage.

Synergy. At a minimum, working through to consensus reduces the margin of error to which majority vote is susceptible; at best, it offers the potential for group synergy—the capacity in problem solving greater than the sum of the members. Synergy is the capacity of a group to surpass the problem-solving ability of the most expert member. Compromise—arriving at a decision by working to a *middle* position—never can produce synergistic solutions.

Self-Intervention. Consensus is essential to the group’s self-directed learning or self-intervention. Self-directed learning is based on mutual, interdependent planning. In seeking to identify group goals, a self-directed group must find a decision-making mechanism that ensures that those defined goals meet the needs of all members. This can be ensured only through proactive, intensive consensus seeking.

Summary: Consensus and Values

Janis (1977) suggests that the failure of groups to address issues of philosophy and values is one of the factors contributing to groupthink. The antidote to groupthink, the key to the improvement of collaborative decision making, is the vigilant search for information. However, evidence suggests that at least three values affect the quality, thoroughness, and genuineness of the search for information within a group.

Probably the most important, or underlying, value is that a group must protect all of its members from pressure to conform. This requires the concurrence of all members.

A second value that is linked to the first is the active quest for opposing information. A good example of this is a health-care team in a hospital. When the group is successful in encouraging the expression of opinions of low-status members of the staff, it increases the chances of defusing the power of doctors in the group who pressure the lower-status members.

The third value, drawing in the silent members, is different from the first two in that it runs counter to long-standing assumptions. Even in the most democratic groups, there is a *lack of will* to bring the silent members into the discussion, especially when they are of low status. Protesting the right of members to be left in peace cloaks hypocrisy. LOGS denies the right of members to remain silent. Membership creates an obligation to participate. A side effect is that LOGS makes the group a safer place for people who lack self-confidence.

LOGS Six: Control of Time and Creativity

LOGS Six makes the pressure of time a source of group energy. LOGS groups take control of time; meetings begin on time and end on time, and agenda items are timed and monitored. Time also is used for creative problem solving; the group allocates the ten minutes required to brainstorm alternative goals and methods as well as alternative solutions. The creative control of time begins when the group identifies and denies the excuse of lack of time to block planned, creative change.

Groups use the excuse of lack of time to accomplish the following:

1. Avoid setting goals for their meetings;
2. Rush to find solutions for problems that have not been defined;
3. Dispense with climate-setting activities;
4. Table disagreements;
5. Force false “consensus” and bless the right of silent members to be left in peace;
6. Avoid brainstorming for creative alternatives;
7. Avoid a process critique;
8. Put off the task of defining their mission and purpose;
9. Avoid making decisions; and
10. Continue to use old processes and old ideas.

LOGS groups do a lot of problem solving under self-imposed time pressures. They learn to pull back and allocate time to clarify their terms and the problem, to make conscious decisions about their methods. Time pressures are employed to energize group learning and creativity. In LOGS the purpose of a timed agenda is not to stifle discussion or rush decisions but to increase the amount of time spent on significant problems and to protect processes such as climate setting, process critiques, and creative problem solving. The strategy is not to expand time, but to take strict control of it. A timed agenda increases the probability that alternatives will be generated by eliminating the excuse of lack of time.

To control time, the group must define the decision to change; it must allocate time at the end of every meeting for a process critique, it must establish opportunities for brainstorming, and so on. Once the group perceives that it has taken responsibility for

change, it can continue to expand its goals, widen its range of methods, and enlarge its repertoire of skills.

NAMING THE LEARNING FOR SELF-INTERVENTION

The adoption of any or all of the six core LOGS competencies is, in itself, a form of self-intervention. However, the core repertoire is intended to serve as a basis from which a group builds additional competencies as it becomes aware of its power to continue to learn and change. This function is called naming the learning for continuing self-intervention; the tool for naming the learning is the process critique.

LOGS research suggests that any group can learn to conduct critiques to improve its methods, but most of the support for this form of self-analysis is derived from team building in organization development. Reilly and Jones (1974) state:

Process awareness is, to our mind, the essence of team building. When it understands and monitors its own process, a group is better able to accomplish its tasks and to utilize the talents of its members. Each process dimension...needs to be focused upon as the opportunity arises in the group. (pp. 230–231)

Naming the learning is an inductive process, the formation of generalizations—principles, theories, concepts—from the evidence of particular data. It is a three-step process of self-intervention and change:

1. Group members identify significant data—the incidents of the session that pleased or bothered them. For example, “We forgot that we had decided to conduct a climate-setting activity at the beginning of each session.”
2. They generalize from their own data, forming and assessing concepts, theories, philosophical statements, even values. For example, “We may forget our own decisions.”
3. The group members determine how they will apply the newly formed principles and define the applications in specific, *behavioral* terms. For example, “We will begin every session with a ten-minute process analysis of the previous session, and we will put it in writing.”

It is very important that groups learn to use the process critique to preserve *successful* innovations as well as to record the need for further self-intervention for change. The process critique should not become a negative experience. Positive innovations are protected in LOGS groups, especially because the influences in *other* groups to which members belong can seduce them to resume old patterns of group behavior that are easier but less productive and rewarding.

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■ STRIDE: THE BREAKTHROUGH PROCESS

John J. Scherer

Our thinking has created problems
which cannot be solved
by that same level of thinking.
Albert Einstein

Nor is it strange
After changes upon changes
we are more or less the same, yes
After changes, we are more or less the same
Paul Simon, *The Boxer*

A problem presents itself; people work very hard to solve it; they decide on an action that appears to be a *change* for the better; yet, after a period of time, it becomes clear that although the surface issue may have been resolved, the basic problem has not been touched. In the results of an organizational-effectiveness survey that the author helped to develop (Crosby & Scherer, 1985) one item began to show up as highly predictive of the success or productivity of a company: “Even though my fellow team members and I agree to solutions, the same problems keep coming back over and over again.” The score on this item is among the lowest for every organization surveyed, regardless of location, size, or type of industry. It appears that organizations in the U.S. do a lot of what is called “problem solving” without addressing the real issues or problems. Typically, the things that need to be discovered and changed continue to exist just under the surface of the group’s attention, then rise to the surface somewhere else as the same or “another” problem.

This happens for two reasons:

1. The solution agreed to was not a good one because it failed to contact the deeper issue of which the “problem” was a manifestation; or
2. People did not follow through on what they decided. (It might have been a good decision, but nobody carried it out.)

The STRIDE process is designed to identify the root issue(s) and to produce high-quality solutions that are actually carried out. The process also creates the potential for a “breakthrough,” which is very different from the typical “solution.”

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BREAKTHROUGH

A breakthrough is a fundamental shift in the situation, usually experienced as a basic or profound change in the way those involved “hold” or view the problem. A breakthrough is a new way of thinking. It creates the space for something totally new to happen. People explore the “problem” at a different level than the one at which it shows itself at first; they “get to the bottom of things.”

A breakthrough solution is always accompanied by unusual amounts of energy released in the people involved as well as by a high level of confidence in the ultimate success of the decision, even in the face of early evidence to the contrary. This happens because of a strong commitment to see that the solution works.

The Ingredients of a Breakthrough

It often happens that all of the information needed for a successful resolution of a situation is already present in the system. For example, three incidents from U.S. history—the Titanic disaster, the Bay of Pigs invasion, and the war in Vietnam—all revealed that people had data and points of view that, if brought forward and accepted, could have produced the breakthrough decisions needed.

Valuable information or a crucial point of view may not be *recognized* by the person who holds it, much less by the group; or it may not be available *in the right format at the right time* in order to be utilized. After a breakthrough occurs, people usually say, “That was simple; why didn’t we think of it earlier?”

The STRIDE process is a common-sense method for creating the mental environment (the frame of mind) in which a breakthrough can occur. It is designed to help a group to determine and find access to the information it needs (1) to address a problem, not a symptom; (2) to make an intelligent decision about what to do; (3) to obtain sufficient commitment to guarantee success; and (4) to be able to determine how the solution is working later.

In “breaking through,” there is a clear sense of hurdling or surmounting an almost tangible mental boundary. This boundary represents the group’s (or person’s) belief in the existence of certain limits or circumstances, characterized as a “mental rut” or a pattern in the way that problems are approached. This mental rut is, in most cases, a major contributor to the problem, the inability to solve it, and the frustration that results.

Resistance to Breakthroughs: Why We Fight the Best Solutions

Ironically, most groups have a natural resistance to obtaining the breakthroughs they are seeking. We are afraid of the alternatives, of what might be “outside.” People instinctively realize that in attaining something, they must give something up; and the way that one has been thinking about something is very personal and, thus, very precious.

By unwittingly holding on to a problem while “trying” to solve it, we allow ourselves to retain our view of the way things are. Many of us would rather be “right”

and have valid reasons for why things do not work than be willing to be “wrong” about something and obtain the results we want.

Conditions for Breakthrough Problem Solving

In order to achieve breakthrough, the individual or the group must be in the right frame of mind (context) and then think about the right things at the right time (process). The context is characterized by four conditions. They must exist before the problem is attacked. Within this context, however, virtually any problem-solving process will work.

Alignment

Alignment implies a “critical mass” of participants around the ultimate purpose or mission of the group and agreement about how the breakthrough will contribute to it. This means that the people involved in the process must agree on the overall purpose of the larger system. To generate sufficient commitment to achieve breakthrough, the effort must be connected to something “big” and must be important to everyone in the system. People must perceive the *opportunity* that is inherent in the breakthrough.

There also must be clarity and agreement about how the final decision will be made, that is, how much influence the group will have and how much influence the boss will have. It is imperative that this be clear in each person’s mind before the process begins.

Integrity

Each individual in the group must believe that the others will do what they say they will do. In a context of mistrust, no breakthrough is possible except, perhaps, to create a shift toward greater trust. It is imperative that a condition of integrity characterize the discussion and decision making. If this condition does not exist to begin with, everyone must commit to make it happen, regardless of the past, and then act accordingly.

Responsibility

The people involved must be willing to take 100-percent responsibility for resolving the situation. The group must identify the ones who have the power to create the change. Blaming someone else or waiting for something else to change creates an atmosphere of powerlessness in which breakthrough cannot occur. Only those who decide—often despite common sense or “fairness” or the chain of command—to take 100 percent of the responsibility for producing the breakthrough will be in a position to make a difference.

An example of this can be seen when two people attempt to shake hands. If both of them simply extend their hands, the hands may not meet. If, however, one person takes responsibility for making it happen, he or she will reach out and pursue the other person’s hand until the two make contact. Progress is rarely made when people limit their efforts to a portion of what is needed.

Commitment

If there is commitment, the group goes on record that it will make the breakthrough happen, no matter what. Commitment implies the will and the energy to make the breakthrough occur.

Creating the Right Context

Any group, no matter what its history, can decide to act in accordance with the four conditions just described. In fact, just the act of reaching agreement about these conditions may change the nature of the “problem.” The lack of one or more of these conditions may be the real problem that needs to be solved.

To help the group to prepare for the STRIDE process, each member must do the following:

1. Tell the truth, at least to himself or herself.
2. Adopt the position that “I don’t know...” rather than “I already know....”
3. Be willing to let go of whatever is not working.
4. Keep the image of the transformed situation and the ultimate mission in mind at all times.
5. Approach the problem-solving session as if it definitely could transform the situation.
6. Allow any cynicism and resistance to be transformed by the process.

Each member must think of the breakthrough process as a holographic one. The “problem” is actually a manifestation of something else. The group members must ask, “What is this specific problem trying to tell us about our group or situation?” and “What still will be left unresolved even if we successfully resolve this specific problem?” Each “trip” through the STRIDE questions may produce a new awareness of the situation, and the process may have to be repeated again and again until the group reaches the “source issue” or root of the problem. Every *superficial* solution produces new dilemmas.

When the group generates a breakthrough concept or proposal, everything else will be seen in a transformed perspective. Any new problems that may be engendered by the solution will not seem to matter very much. The group’s whole way of approaching the situation will change, even though many of the details of the situation may appear the same.

THE STRIDE PROCESS

S: The Situation Now

Any breakthrough must start with what is. Clearly identifying the present situation, including any pain in it, can help to provide the commitment needed later. The potential breakthrough is an *opportunity* implicit in the current reality.

The group members must identify the following:

1. What is happening now in the situation that we intend to transform?
2. What is a recent, concrete example of the problem?
3. What/how is the situation costing the group or organization? Who is suffering the most?
4. Who else do we need to be talking with (or involving in our deliberations) if we are to succeed? Who is affected by or will have to carry out our solution? How should we involve these people?
5. When we have produced a breakthrough in this area, how will it impact our mission/purpose?
6. Where is the impetus for change coming from? Who currently “owns” the problem?

T: The Target

When you don't know where you are going, you're liable to end up somewhere else.
“Pogo”

A clear picture of the *possibility* that a breakthrough represents is necessary to direct efforts toward it. Groups that focus only on the *problem* achieve less than do groups that focus on desired outcomes. The following questions can help the group members to develop a “target”:

1. What would success look like? What will happen/not be happening (in concrete examples) when we create the breakthrough?
2. Who shares this picture of the way things could be? Who would like to see this picture become reality?
3. How should these people/groups be involved in the process?

One way to help the group members to envision the way things could be is to use guided imagery. Group members may be directed to close their eyes, to travel into the future, and to hover over various aspects of the situation, listening to and noticing the things that surprise and delight them—things they never thought could be achieved. Many useful insights, as well as positive mindsets, are generated by this process.

R: Reasons/Restraining Forces

An accurate analysis of the forces that restrain or oppose a solution or breakthrough is necessary. The group members also must identify the “opposition,” that is, people who may hinder the envisioned solution. There usually are several reasons that a problem continues to exist. Every problem serves some function in the situation and will leave a hole when the breakthrough occurs.

The group must accomplish two things in order to deal with these issues:

1. Determine why the problem continues to exist. (Why has it not taken care of itself?)
2. Conduct and draw a force-field analysis of the situation. (What is working for and against a breakthrough in the situation?)

I: Identifying Key Restraints/Ideas

It is necessary to identify the one or two most important aspects of the analysis of the situation developed thus far. A single factor, or a cluster of them, usually emerges or is sensed by the group. If the members can agree to a commitment to transform that factor or cluster, they have won half of the battle. The following questions may help in this process:

1. Which of the restraining forces are both significant and reducible?
2. Which ones seem closest to the source of the issue?
3. What specifically needs to happen that is inhibited by these forces?
4. What might the group do about these things?

D: Deciding/Doing/Designing

To decide to do something means to commit 100 percent. It helps to be clear from the beginning about how the final decision will be made and by whom. If this information about the decision is not clear, resistance, reluctance to commit, or picky arguments about details may emerge. If the group is aligned as well as committed, progress will be greatly enhanced. The following questions can help the group members to ready themselves for action:

1. What do we agree to do? Are we willing to commit ourselves 100 percent to do this?
2. What do we need to have *others* do?
3. What is our plan of action? Who will do what? By when?

E: Evidence of Success/Evaluation

This is an important step that is often overlooked. It closes the loop and creates accountability and expectancy. When signs of success are identified, the breakthrough is

supported and nurtured in the face of resistance. The following questions will help the group members to evaluate their progress:

1. What will be the signs of success?
2. Who will be responsible for ensuring that these things are achieved?
3. What evidence will convince us that a breakthrough has occurred?
4. How long will it take for us to decide or know?
5. How will we celebrate or acknowledge our success?

During the STRIDE process, the group must check continually to ensure that all four contextual conditions (alignment, integrity, responsibility, commitment) are present. If one or more is absent, the group must stop the process and work on the contextual issue(s).

Although the process is presented in a linear sequence, it need not occur in that order. If a great idea emerges, it may be most feasible to work outward from there, going backward and forward in the model until all of the steps have been covered. If confronted by an obstacle, the group members would be wise to start with identification of the restraining forces and proceed from there.

As with any new process or skill, the time that it takes (and the self-consciousness that it engenders) to use the process diminishes as the process or skill becomes familiar and as experience is gained in using it. After a while, it can become part of the way in which the group operates.

HOW TRAINERS AND CONSULTANTS CAN USE THE PROCESS

With a work team or other type of group, the STRIDE process can be used for *problem solving*. A suggested format for this use is as follows:

1. Deliver a lecturette on the four contextual conditions necessary for breakthrough.
2. Obtain a statement of group alignment on the ultimate purpose or mission of the group or organization.
3. Ask “Who is willing to take personal responsibility for ensuring that a breakthrough occurs here?” Do not proceed until at least one solid commitment has been made.
4. Deliver a lecturette on the STRIDE process.
5. Post a sheet of newsprint on the wall and record all aspects of the STRIDE process. Tell the group members not to worry about “getting ahead” or “being off the subject.”
6. Start with the situation and move ahead.
7. Stop periodically to check for the four contextual conditions.

The process can be used as a *consulting model* to guide the conditions required in one's working relationships with clients. A description of the STRIDE process can be distributed to key participants, and the similarity between STRIDE and an action-research model of change can be pointed out.

The STRIDE process can be used as an *interviewing framework* or in making a first personal or telephone contact. Covering each of the steps in the STRIDE process creates a framework for the discussion and helps to keep it on track.

In designing training events, the consultant/trainer can use the model to ask the client the right questions. Substituting "Design" for "Do" turns STRIDE into a design process.

HOW MANAGERS CAN USE THE PROCESS

STRIDE is particularly effective as a *problem-solving process*, both in meetings and for thinking through a problem alone before deciding how to handle it. STRIDE also has value as a *model of transition management* because it clarifies how one wants to work with a new group or organization. Finally, the process can serve as a *consultant-client model* from the manager's point of view, to guide the consultant in dealing with the manager's issues and in working with the manager and his or her people.

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■ PLANNED RENEGOTIATION: A NORM-SETTING OD INTERVENTION

John J. Sherwood and John C. Glidewell

Organization development has been described as “an educational process by which human resources are continuously identified, allocated, and expanded in ways that make these resources more available to the organization and, therefore, improve the organization’s problem-solving capabilities” (Sherwood, 1971). The concept of planned renegotiation describes a procedure by which controlled change can enter an organization in such a way that resources become more available to the organization. It is derived from a clear and simple theory of how roles are established and changed (Glidewell, 1971).

The theory itself is a norm-setting intervention because it is intended to become part of the normative structure of an organization and as such to become part of the language, rhetoric, and expectations of the members of the organization. Furthermore, the use of these concepts in successful problem-solving leads to the learning of behavioral skills by insight, reinforcement, and imitation. As we often like to hear Lewin (1951) say, there is nothing as practical as a good theory. Where the concept of planned renegotiation becomes part of the norms of an organization, it can constitute the heart of an OD effort.

THE MODEL

The model describes how social systems—that is, relations among people and relations among groups—are established and become stabilized so that work can get done and how change can enter the system. The model is cyclical, and it includes four phases.

Phase 1: Sharing Information and Negotiating Expectations

When individuals begin to establish a relationship that they expect may endure over some period of time—as brief as a pre-employment interview or as long-lasting as a marriage or an appointment to the U.S. Supreme Court—they first exchange information. They are essentially trading information about themselves and establishing expectations—usually implicit and unspecified—about how a “member” of this

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relationship or a member of this group is going to behave (see Goffman, 1956, p. 162, 1961, pp. 105–132; Thibaut and Kelley, 1959, pp. 21–25; Blau, 1960).

Once a sufficient exchange of information occurs, uncertainty is reduced to an acceptable level and the behaviors of the parties are more or less predictable. If the relationship is seen as enduring sometime into the future, then commitment to these shared expectations takes place.

Phase 2: Commitment

When commitment to a set of shared expectations takes place, then each member's role is defined, and each member knows for the most part what is expected of him or her and for the most part what he or she can expect from the others. The strength of each individual's commitment and the range of his or her behavior encompassed by his or her role are both measures of the importance or centrality to him or her of this particular relationship.

The more important the relationship, the more evidence of commitment is required and the more behaviors—including attitudes, values, and perceptions—are embraced by the role expectations. With commitment comes stability.

Phase 3: Stability and Productivity

When there is commitment to a set of shared expectations, these expectations govern the behavior of group members and provide stability within the relationships; that is, for the most part you do what I expect of you and for the most part I do what you expect of me. This stability in the relationships leads to the possibility that work can now get done. While stability does not guarantee productivity, it is necessary for productive work to occur. The energy of the principals is now available for other things since their relationships are sufficiently predictable that they no longer required sustained attention.

Commitment to a set of shared expectations, then, governs behavior during a period of stability; but invariably, sooner or later, disruption occurs. (Blau, 1967; Homans, 1961).

Phase 4. Disruption

Disruption occurs because of a violation of expectations by the principals or because of external intrusion into the system. It is assumed that disruption is inevitable; only the duration of the period of stability varies because (a) information is never completely shared during the initial period when expectations are negotiated and (b) individuals, groups, and organizations are viewed as open systems (Katz & Kahn, 1966), i.e., they change as a consequence of transactions with their environment (Glidewell, 1971).

Disruptions may be external in origin, such as a new person assigned to a work group, a loss of personnel, an assignment of a new task or higher quota, a budgetary cut and reallocation of resources, or reorganization of personnel and subsequent reassignment of duties. The first child born into a marriage is an example of a new input

into the relationship that is likely to lead to the violation of previously established expectations. Disruptions may also be internal in origin, such as the sharing of information that was not made available earlier when expectations were being negotiated. People also change as a consequence of new experiences, training, and education. When the changed person returns to the unchanged role, expectations may be violated, leading to a disruption of the relationship.

It is at the point of disruption that change can enter the system, for it is at this time that expectations are no longer fixed. New information can now enter the system, and the renegotiation of expectations can occur. Once again the system recycles through (1) sharing information and renegotiating expectations, followed by (2) commitment to a set of expectations that governs behavior during a period of (3) stability and productivity, when, for the most part, you do what I expect of you and I do what you expect of me, until (4) disruption once again occurs because of a violation of expectations by the principals or because of external intrusion into the system. With disruption change can once again enter the system, as it cycles from renegotiation through disruption and yet another opportunity for renegotiation (see Figure 1).

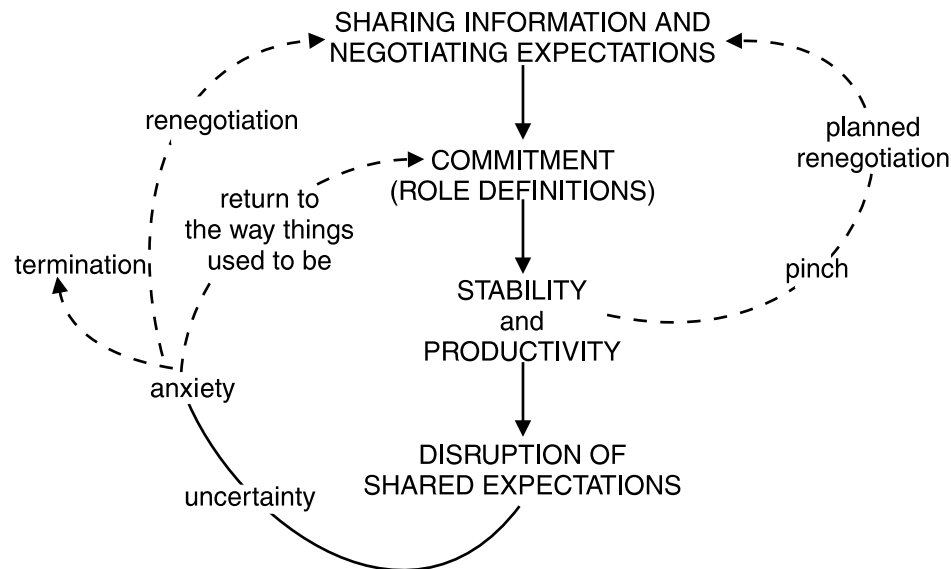


Figure 1

The paradox is that the very moment the system is most open to change there are strong inhibiting forces working to return things “to the way they used to be” because of anxiety accompanying the uncertainty that characterizes the system at the time it is in a state of disruption (Lanzetta, 1955; Korchin et al., 1957).

Disruption Leading to Uncertainty

When a disruption of expectations occurs, uncertainty follows—because I can no longer depend on your doing what I expect of you, and my own role is also unclear to me—and, with uncertainty, the principals become anxious. The anxiety is uncomfortable. The

quickest and surest way to reduce that anxiety is for the relationship to return once again “to the way things used to be.” This is often a ritualized commitment to prior expectations, such as a perfunctory apology, handshake, or embrace, without admitting into the system the new information that is now available, having given rise to the disruption. This new information could form the basis for renegotiating the expectations governing the relationship. The relationship, however, remains closed to change when the parties deal with the uncertainty and anxiety produced by disruption by returning to the original level of sharing expectations without renegotiation: for example, the pledge “it won’t happen again”; or the admonition “don’t let it happen again”; or the reaffirmation of the way things used to be, “let’s be gentlemen”; or “I’m sorry, I was wrong, everything is now okay...nothing is changed!” (Postman & Bruner, 1948; Hermann, 1963).

Disruption Leading to Renegotiation

It is during the period of disruption, when the parties are uncertain about their roles and the future of the relationship and are therefore anxious, that the system must be held open if change is to enter. If new information is allowed to enter the relationship and is treated in a problem-solving way, it can provide the basis for renegotiating the expectations governing the relationship. The newly renegotiated expectations are therefore more likely to be in line with the current realities of the situation, and once commitment occurs, the period of stability is likely to endure longer before the next disruption ensues.

If the parties share this model as a part of their language and their mutual expectations, these concepts are likely to help them by increasing their tolerance for the uncertainty and the accompanying anxiety that surround their relationship while expectations are held open during renegotiation. Through continued use of these concepts, the behavioral skills of the parties also increase, thereby facilitating the renegotiation process.

The theory predicts that disruption without renegotiation leads to an increasing frequency and intensity of disruptions. When each disruption is not treated as a new source of information and a new opportunity for adjustment of expectations and change, but rather as a disagreeable state that cannot be tolerated due to the urgency to return “to the way things used to be,” then the source of the disruption is never satisfactorily remedied, improved, or even ameliorated. If the problem or difficulty in the relationship is never addressed directly, it is likely to persist and add to the intensity of future disruptions precipitated by new problems entering the relationship.¹ The more inflexible the system—a two-person relationship, a group, an organization, or a community—the

¹ The intensity of future disruptions is not likely to be increased where problems or difficulties in a relationship are handled by reducing commitment to the relationship. In this case, an apparent “return to the way things used to be” is actually a withdrawal of commitment. Over time such a strategy leads to an atrophied relationship. (In the Marriage Grid [19] by Mouton and Blake, this is a 1,1 orientation, e.g., “Home is where I eat, sleep, and keep my things.”)

more likely that a final disruptive event will be explosive. Such a relationship is likely to be terminated in a manner destructive to the parties involved.

Disruption Leading to Termination

Whenever disruption occurs, the possibility of terminating the relationship is always an alternative solution. Termination is likely to be a constructive, problem-solving solution when it is a consequence of renegotiation. Termination is more likely to result in the destructive loss of resources in one or more of the following situations: (1) the disruption is unplanned and explosive; (2) the system is rigid and inflexible; or (3) the parties have little or no prior experience in renegotiating and adjusting to changing conditions.

PLANNED RENEGOTIATION

The model states that relationships cycle through these phases: (1) the sharing of information and negotiation of expectations; (2) commitment; (3) stability and productivity; (4) disruption and the possibility of renegotiation and therefore change. It has also been assumed that it is difficult to hold the system open for renegotiation because of the uncertainty and anxiety that prevails at that time. These concepts then provide a way to introduce controlled change by anticipating disruption and renegotiating expectations in advance. This is known as planned renegotiation.

When this simple model of how roles are established and how they change is available to the parties and when the parties have skills in sharing reactions, feelings, and perceptions about their relationship, change can be introduced in a controlled and systematic way through planned renegotiation. This process is less stressful than renegotiation under conditions of disruption. Both the model and the concept of planned renegotiation thus become parts of the relationship so that “whenever I feel a pinch,” that pinch is shared and the possibility of renegotiation is raised. A pinch is a signal of the possibility of an impending disruption, and it describes a sense of loss of freedom within one’s current role (see Figure 1). The felt loss of freedom may be due to a sense of expanded resources or to the subtle constriction of expectations by others. In either case, there is the possibility of resources lost to the system.

Some examples of pinches that raise the possibility of renegotiation:

- “I think I am now ready to go to New York on a buying trip without you.”
- “I find that I am defensive with you because you judge others so harshly. I don’t want you judging me that way.”
- “While I will continue to do all the drafting work, I would like to do some engineering work on this project.”

- “I think that I somehow have to know all the answers because no one in this group ever admits that they don’t know something. I therefore bluff my way along.”
- “We are always talking about how bright we all are, and as a consequence I am becoming more and more cautious about the ideas I choose to share lest they appear anything but brilliant.”
- “I have to begin saying ‘no’ to you, or you have to stop adding to my workload. I will be unable to meet the commitments I have already made unless something is changed.”
- “I like you a lot, and I suddenly realize that I am very hesitant to disagree with you for fear that you will then dislike me.”

When the question of renegotiation of expectations is raised at that point in the relationship that one of the members feels a pinch, the parties have more choice and more control over change. They are subject to fewer negotiations “under fire,” and they are less often victims of crises and pressures to return to the way things used to be.

IMPLICATIONS AND DISCUSSION

Planned renegotiation is likely to be a successful norm-setting intervention in an organization where there is some prior commitment to the concept of organization development so that persons are neither so closed that differences are ignored and inappropriately smoothed over nor so competitive that differences are exploited by subversive rivalry.

On the other hand, people need concepts to guide their behavior. Organization development efforts often involve skill training in interpersonal relations, or process consultation, or prescriptions to do things differently, such as “be open.” However, people are often trained in interpersonal skills without an adequate theoretical framework that provides concepts to guide behavior. The tools of Gestalt therapy help people expand their own awareness of themselves and make more data available to the system but raise the question of what to do with the newly available data. The planned renegotiation model supplies a framework for building more productive working relationships with information generated through organization development efforts.

Similarly, participative management systems need more information from all levels of supervision in order to function effectively, but once the information is generated, how is it to be handled? The planned renegotiation model also offers a way for allowing new information to change the system when such change is agreeable to all parties involved.

The Theory Behind Planned Renegotiation

The theory underlying the concept of planned renegotiation is clear, simple, and straightforward. Theoretical elaborations have been purposely avoided. It is intended that the concepts become part of the language of organizational life. People can be trained in the skills of planned renegotiation. It is important that they learn to detect pinches before disruptions develop. A pinch is felt by an individual, whereas a disruption is experienced by all parties involved in the relationship. It is therefore incumbent upon an individual who feels a pinch to take the responsibility for raising the question of renegotiation with the other(s), rather than asserting that it is someone else's problem or responsibility. At the same time, it is important for the individual to understand that when he or she experiences a pinch, anxiety will result. When a pinch is shared and renegotiation considered, then others become anxious as well. People get anxious both because of the uncertainty that is introduced into the relationship and because they are never sure whether they will personally be better off after the renegotiation is completed than they were before. When people work with this model, they learn that anxiety becomes controlled and tolerable when there is a commitment to problem-solving. Nevertheless a risk remains each time the relationship is opened for examination and renegotiation.

In the first few attempts at renegotiation within the model, people are simultaneously working on two problems: (1) trying out a problem-solving model and developing skills and procedures for its use and (2) working on the pinch that gave rise to the renegotiation. Over time both skills and procedures develop, as does confirmation of the model and its usefulness—or lack of usefulness—to the parties involved.

Based on the assumption that “most people in organizations prefer a fair negotiated settlement to a state of unresolved conflict,” Harrison (1971) has developed a very sound procedure for changing role relationships. It should be useful to those who would like to try planned renegotiation in a formally structured and specifically programmed way. Harrison calls his procedure “role negotiation.” It is a detailed program for exchanging expectations and demands for the behavior of others in terms of what each wants others (a) to do more or better, (b) to do less, or (c) to remain unchanged. These expectations are written so as to be clearly understood by both sender and receiver. When one person makes a request or demand for changed behavior on the part of another, that person must specify a quid pro quo he or she is willing to give in order to get what is wanted. The process is complete when an agreement is written that specifies the agreed-upon changes in behavior and makes clear what each party is expected to give in return, including a discussion of possible sanctions for noncompliance. The procedures are clear and simple, if a bit mechanical, and they require a consultant in the early stages to establish the rules and to moderate their use.

Organizational Uses for Planned Renegotiation

There are various other ways organizations might make use of the concept of planned renegotiation. An organization might design a “renegotiating arena,” where the

principals commit themselves not to leave the field until a satisfactory set of mutual expectations is established.² A skilled third-party consultant might be available to them (see Walton, 1969).

A question sometimes asked is “If planned renegotiation is encouraged, won’t this lead to the termination of some relationships that would not otherwise terminate?” Yes, it probably will. Where relationships are terminated by choice, this is likely to be an outcome that is more healthy for the individuals and more productive for the organization over the long run, than to retain members who are essentially “captive.”

While the theory of how roles are established and changed seems to be interpersonal in focus and appears to concentrate on the modification of behavior in one-to-one situations, the concepts also describe the relationship of a person to a group or the relationships of all members of a group to one another, e.g., task group, committee, subordinates reporting to one supervisor, family, etc. Relations among groups—e.g., departments, branch offices, or project teams—are also subject to disruption and renegotiation.³

Rather than a theory of interpersonal affairs, the theory is better described as a description of the establishment and change of relations between elements of a social system—people or groups. The theory is more encompassing than it first might seem; it can include some of the major realities of organizational life, such as the power of economics and legitimate authority and the competition among persons or groups for scarce resources. A subordinate can certainly raise the question of renegotiation with his or her supervisor and can help the supervisor learn to use the model. Issues of authority can be subjects of renegotiation. Where individuals or groups are highly competitive, renegotiation can take the form of more open bargaining rather than secretive, and sometimes subversive, rivalry.

While all of us need concepts to guide our behavior, it would seem that the model of how roles are established and changed and the concept of planned renegotiation would be particularly useful for those who frequently enter and work with temporary systems (Bennis & Slater, 1968). The more fluid and changing the system, the more important it is to be able to develop means of producing information rapidly, permitting people then to appropriately influence one another and to accept appropriate influence. Furthermore, working with this model even within an enduring and established relationship is likely to help a person develop those behavioral skills that are effective in life in temporary systems. These concepts are also probably useful to those who play a mediating role as a third-party consultant to others in conflict.

² The method “Meetings for Two” in Fordyce & Weil (1971, pp. 114–116), is a highly structured session designed to provide the opportunity to renegotiate expectations in a two-person relationship without the benefit of a theoretical model. While a third party is not required, the procedure is so highly structured that the presence of a third person seems almost essential.

³ Several people have reported that this model is also useful for negotiating change in the behavior of a single person (intrapersonal change). Individuals have talked to themselves about themselves and held dialogs in a Gestalt fashion between “how I am now” and “how I would like to be,” followed by commitment to a new set of expectations, stability, disruption, and renegotiation.

SUMMARY

This paper is based on the assumption that people need concepts to guide their behavior. A clear and simple model of how roles are established and changed is presented: relationships cycle through (1) the sharing of information and the negotiation of expectations, then (2) commitment to a set of expectations that governs behavior during a period (3) of stability and productivity during which, for the most part, you do what I expect of you and I do what you expect of me, until (4) disruption occurs and the possibility of change enters the system. This theory itself is a norm-setting intervention into an organization when it becomes a part of the normative structure, language, and expectations of members of the organization.

The concept of planned renegotiation is derived from this model and represents a procedure by which controlled change can enter an organization, thereby freeing and expanding resources for problem solving. This process enhances an organization's internal flexibility, which is one important criterion of organizational effectiveness (Schein, 1965).

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■ WIN/LOSE SITUATIONS

Gerry E. Wiley

Win/lose situations pervade our culture. In the law courts we use the adversary system. Political parties strive to win elections and to win points in legislatures. Debates are common at schools, universities and in the media. The put-down is generally regarded as wit. Competing with and defeating an opponent is the most widely publicized aspect of a good deal of our sports and recreation.

The language of business, politics, and even education is dotted with win/lose terms. One “wins” a promotion, “beats” the competition, buys a lubricant to obtain “the racer’s edge” for his auto. Students strive to “top the class” or “outsmart” the teacher. Although we do recognize cooperative effort and collaboration, it seems that we tend to emphasize “healthy” competition.

In an environment that stresses winning, it is no wonder that competitive behavior persists where it is not appropriate. Imagine a typical committee meeting to decide on a suitable program for a club. Members interrupt one another to introduce their own ideas. Proposals are made that other members do not even acknowledge. Partnerships and power blocs are formed to support one program against proponents of another. When members of such a committee are enabled to analyze the operation of the group, they commonly agree that they were not listening to one another because they were thinking of ways to state a case or to counter the proposal of someone else. They were interrupting to get a point out before the speaker clinched the sale of his idea. In these ways they were acting as competing individuals rather than as a collaborating group. They had started out to reach the best decision regarding a program, but had slipped into a win/lose contest. Very often the original purpose is completely overshadowed by the struggle to win. This failing of committees is common.

Some Potential Win/Lose Situations

Group meetings are not the only sphere in which a win/lose situation can arise. Visualize a consultant discussing a client’s problem. For any of a number of reasons, the client may perceive the consultant’s helpful suggestions not as they were intended but as criticism of the client. As a result the client might also feel in competition with the consultant. The contest would revolve around whose methods were more effective or who could do the job better. Instead of listening to the recommendations, the client would be trying to shoot them down, while the consultant would be concentrating on

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defending his or her expertise. When a consultant and client are locked in a win/lose match, the chances are very small that the consultant's advice will be used.

Win/lose contests can also develop in an organization. Individuals may strive for a dominant position. Battles can rage discreetly (and not so discreetly) between departments. For example, a planning department might develop a new assembly procedure. When it is introduced to the assembly department, the workers might resent it and lock horns with planners. It is easy to interpret the situation in win/lose terms. The planners are showing that they know more and can design a procedure better than the men on the job. If the new procedure works well, the planners "win." On the other hand, if the innovation does not improve production, the planners "lose," and, in a sense, the assemblers "win" because their normal operation proved superior. Seen in this light, it should be expected that the assemblers will not be committed to giving the innovation a fair trial. In extreme cases, they may even sabotage it "to show those theoretical snobs in Planning." In fact all efforts to plan for others are plagued by win/lose traps. In some companies and institutions internal win/lose rivalries absorb more effort than the main production or service.

POTENTIAL RESULTS OF WIN/LOSE

Although there are obviously some instances where a win/lose approach can be a positive factor, it is generally destructive. Win/lose is too often poisonous to interpersonal relations and organizational effectiveness. Suppose a husband loses an argument with his wife, and the couple goes dancing instead of to a horse race. He can retaliate by being sullen or obnoxious. He has turned a win/lose situation into an ordeal where both partners are miserable. Often win/lose "victories" become losses for both parties, producing a "lose/lose" result.

Some of the negative results of win/lose have been shown in the examples already given. The following list identifies fourteen problems that may arise from win/lose confrontations.

1. Divert time and energy from the main issues.
2. Delay decisions.
3. Create deadlocks.
4. Drive unaggressive committee members to the sidelines.
5. Interfere with listening.
6. Obstruct exploration of more alternatives.
7. Decrease or destroy sensitivity.
8. Cause members to drop out or resign from committees.
9. Arouse anger that disrupts a meeting.
10. Interfere with empathy.

11. Leave losers resentful.
12. Incline underdogs to sabotage.
13. Provoke personal abuse.
14. Cause defensiveness.

FROM WIN/LOSE TO WIN/WIN

Since win/lose events will undoubtedly be experienced often in the course of life, it is important to know how to cope with them. If the predominant tendency of win/lose contests is to produce lose/lose outcomes, it becomes a matter of redirecting these toward “win/win” results. In a “win/win” result everyone comes out on top.

It is extremely difficult for one person alone to reorient a win/lose. You are likely to be treated as a third party in the argument, or you may have both adversaries turn on you. Although it would be ideal to have all parties committed to avoiding a win/lose result, the efforts of a significant segment of a group can usually be effective. Even in a one-to-one conflict, one of the parties can often turn off the contest. It takes two to fight. The more people who recognize the dangers in a win/lose struggle and want to adjust the situation, the more likely is a successful outcome.

Some Means of Reorienting to Win/Win

1. Have clear goals, understood and agreed upon. Use the goals to test whether issues are relevant or not.
2. Be on the lookout for win/lose. It can develop subtly. If you feel under attack, or feel yourself lining up support, you are likely in a win/lose contest.
3. Listen empathetically to others. Stop yourself from working on counter arguments while another person is speaking. Take the risk of being persuaded. Try the other person’s reasoning on for size.
4. Avoid absolute statements that leave no room for modification. “I think this is the way . . .” is better than “This is THE ONLY way . . .”
5. If you are planning for others, provide some means for their involvement. The doers should feel that they can have influence on decisions that affect them.
6. Try to make decisions by consensus rather than by victory of the majority.
7. Test to see that trade-offs and compromises are truly accepted by all.
8. Draw a continuum line and have members place themselves on it regarding the issue. It often occurs that the different “sides” are not far apart.
9. Be alert to selling or winning strategies in others and avoid using them yourself. “Any intelligent person can see the advantages . . .” would be a danger signal.

This list is not exhaustive, but may provide a beginning toward more productive relationships. The key idea in adjusting a win/lose situation is to strive for what is best for all rather than trying to *get your way*.

■ A GESTALT APPROACH TO COLLABORATION IN ORGANIZATIONS

H.B. Karp

Since the early 1950s and the rise of the human relations movement, much emphasis has been placed on the need and importance for collaboration in the organizational setting. While there is much in the literature to support this view (e.g., Bennis, 1966), an alternate approach, that of Gestalt organization development (OD), has been reported on and espoused by Herman (1971),¹ who suggests that the emphasis of organization development should be embodied in the individual rather than in the group. While this different emphasis has great potential for conflict, it also has equally great potential for a positive effect.

Collaboration will produce the greatest payoff in terms of satisfaction and productivity when the individuals participating in the collaborative effort view themselves as individuals at all times.

That is, (1) the individual member is clear and concise about what he or she wants for himself or herself and for the organization, and (2) the individual can effect and maintain good contact with himself or herself as well as with the other group members. Contact, simply defined, is the coming together of one with something or someone that is not one. It is the appreciation of the uniqueness and difference of the other.

Collaboration works with some groups and not with others. When collaboration is “swallowed whole” as a slogan or a panacea for organizational ills, the positive results that occur are, at best, temporary—e.g., there may be a slight increase in contributions from the participating members due either to the newness of the approach or to an overzealous conversion to an exciting new “religion” called OD. This is particularly true when the organization adopts a “total-systems approach” and the subtle message becomes: “You damn well better get on board or be viewed as an outcast.” The problem with deifying concepts such as collaboration, change, and personal growth is that the nonbelievers tend to go underground as the converts zealously go forward. This situation often results in the loss of whatever creative efforts the “now underground” heretics doled out, however sparingly, prior to the great conversion. Nonbelievers, of course, quickly learn the phraseology and how to “play the game” when survival in the organization is at stake.

The issue here is not whether collaboration is a good or bad concept; the issue is what successful collaboration is based on. I strongly suggest that collaboration must be

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¹ I wish to express my sincere thanks to Stan Herman for his encouragement and for his criticism of this paper.

based on the recognition of the power that resides in the individual and his or her right to be himself or herself. If it is not, the result, at best, is a temporary increase in activity, and, at worst, a process that could sap the strength and vitality of the organization.

Consider for a moment the Gestalt notion that the whole is more than the sum of its parts. Implicit in this construct, for me, is the corollary that the maximum potential for the whole (the group) can be realized only as the maximum potential for each part (the individual) is realized. Thus we have two factors to consider when talking about collaboration: the individual and the group.

THE INDIVIDUAL

Perls (1970), the “father” of Gestalt therapy, defines maturity as “relying on internal rather than external supports” (p. 17); i.e., the more mature an individual is, the more that person will rely on his or her own sense of the situation for guidance when faced with ambiguity or conflict, rather than on the opinions of others. This does not imply that the individual rejects out of hand what others think or feel; after considering all that is salient, he or she will decide what he or she is willing or not willing to do. This developing of maturity, or “centering,” as Perls (1972, p. 103) calls it, is the most critical element in the individual’s ability to be creative and more productive. It follows then that the more centered an individual is, the more he or she is in touch with his or her strengths, weaknesses, commitments, priorities, etc., and therefore the more able to contribute productively to group effort when that is what is called for. “Centering” is to Gestalt what “togetherness” is to conventional human relations.

Centering is a process that continues for the life of the individual (Perls, 1972) and not something that is easily attained or quickly mastered by the application of a few techniques. It is the process by which the self is made known to the individual and accepted as unique and valuable. The more an individual is centered, the more he or she is able to respond effectively to the here and now of a situation; the more visible he or she is as a unique individual; and thus the more able to make authentic, and therefore effective, contact with others. While anyone can collaborate, effective collaboration in today’s world of organizational complexity and absence of lead time is a direct function of the degree of centeredness that exists for each of the group members.

Most children under the age of six have very little problem in making and maintaining contact, particularly with one another. They seem to display a clear sense of what they want and what they do not want and are open about it; they are constantly excited by encountering new and different things; they submit to, but rarely collude with, attempts to block them. I have yet to see a child accept the parental prelude, “I’m doing this to you for your own good!” It would seem that effective contact is a natural state and that we have learned to be phony, polite, defensive, agreeable, devious, and all the other ways we “should” or “should not” be. Clearly these characteristics are not consistent with what makes for good contact and productive collaborative effort.

Workshops designed to deal with the problem of training individuals to become more centered may be a necessary precondition to collaboration in some organizations.

Ten norms for contact can be suggested to focus the attention of individuals on reasons why they are not making effective solid contact. There are probably fifty more that could as easily be used.

1. “Talking About” Rather Than “Dealing With”

One of the best ways of not dealing with a problem is to talk about it endlessly. A certain amount of “talking about” is necessary to lay out the problem or to explain particular views. However, it becomes destructive when one continues to talk after alternative choices have emerged that can be pursued to deal with the problem.

2. “Should” Rather Than “Is”

If we acknowledge the Gestalt assumption that the past is gone and cannot be changed and the future is not yet here, then all we can deal with is the “right here” and “right now.” “Shoulds,” “oughts,” “thou shalt/shalt nots” are interdictions from the past, which may have been effective in the past, but may not be salient to what is going on in the present. (See Herman, 1971.) Clearly, whatever the present situation is, it is somehow different from any situation ever encountered before. By plugging in set rules from the past, the individual is restricting himself or herself, to some degree, by not allowing himself or herself to deal with the uniqueness of the present situation. Instead, when an “I should” is replaced with an “I want,” the individual is making a conscious choice that is geared to the ongoing situation.

3. “I Can’t” Instead of “I Won’t”

Clearly, there are many things in the organization that the individual cannot do. For example, most managers cannot arbitrarily fire someone, give raises at will, etc. There are, however, many areas in which the manager does have much, if not complete, discretionary power. Therefore, if the manager elects to deny a subordinate’s request with an “I can’t” when the situation is one in which he or she really can but chooses not to, then the manager is telling the subordinate “I am powerless to do anything to help you.” More important, by stating “I can’t” when he or she truly can, the manager diminishes his or her own strength; i.e., the more powerless the manager presents himself or herself, the more powerless he or she actually becomes. Not only does this tend to erode the manager’s influence with his or her subordinates, it also increases the probability that the subordinate will continue to come back with the same request, or similar ones, in the hope that perhaps now the boss can do something. As long as the boss resorts to the “I can’t” position, the subordinate never hears the real underlying issue: “I won’t.”

4. A Question Instead of a Statement

Questions are obviously quite functional when they represent a request for information. However, when a statement is “politely” masked as a question—e. g., “Don’t you agree that . . .?” or “Wouldn’t you think . . .?”—several outcomes occur that weaken the individual’s ability to make solid contact. First, the individual places himself or herself in a “one-down” position by requesting the other’s approval to his or her masked statement. Not only does the statement get lost in the question, the asker has placed himself or herself in the position of needing to listen to the other’s answer. In reality, the asker wanted to have the other person hear something that he or she had to say. There is also a tendency for the asker to dilute the strength of his or her original position by phrasing it in terms of a question.

This strategy also creates negative affect in the person to whom the question is addressed. There is the high probability that some confusion will occur if the hearer believes that a question is really being posed; the confusion increases if the answer, should it be other than expected, is met with an argument, generally in the form of another loaded question.

Also, the use of such a question may actually invite the hearer’s distrust of the speaker, rather than draw that person closer or make him or her more receptive to the statement.

5. “You,” “One,” “It,” “We,” “They,” Instead of “I”

There is probably some truth to the old adage “There is safety in numbers”; certainly, there is anonymity. There are times when it is very functional to use pronouns other than “I”; e.g., “you” when I am talking to you, “we” when I am representing the opinion of a group of which I am a member, and so on. However, I can best make myself heard (and hear myself and know where I stand) by taking full responsibility for my thoughts, ideas, feelings, etc. This can only be done if I tell you that it is “I” saying this to “you.”

6. “Yes” Instead of “No”

This norm probably contributes most to an individual losing his or her centeredness. When an individual says “Yes” or assents by default, when he or she feels or thinks “No” or agrees when there is little or no cause for agreement, two things happen. First, the individual is committed to an action or idea that he or she truly wants no part of, and makes himself or herself tacitly responsible for the outcomes and a victim to the process. Second, by agreeing when he or she feels or thinks “No,” the person withholds his or her real point of view, which might have been valuable in creating a more desirable outcome.

Hearing “Yes” continually also creates mistrust in the one who is asking for something. Simply put: if I cannot trust you to say “No” when you feel or think “No,” then I cannot trust your “Yes” either. If your response to me is always a “Yes,” no

matter what the request or circumstances, how will I be able to gauge the degree of your support when I really need it?

7. *On and On and On and On*

Repeating the message over and over to create impact is about as effective as repeating a punchline over and over to get a laugh. The general effect of repetition is boredom. Thus, each time the message is repeated by the speaker, its impact becomes increasingly diluted, both for the speaker and for the listeners. This can be demonstrated by choosing a word, preferably an emotionally laden one, and repeating it audibly fifteen times. One can notice the transition from “high impact” to meaningless guttural.

8. *“Broadcast” Instead of Contact*

Contact is based on directness and impact. Addressing the group (or the ceiling, or the middle of the room) as the means of “getting the message across” to just one or several of the group’s members is a sure way to lessen the quality of the impact. If, for example, I, as a manager, want to reprimand you “politely” in the group by saying, “Some of us are not getting the job done,” you have every justification for saying to yourself, “She certainly isn’t talking to me.”

9. *Fake Contact*

Whether contact is focused on the self or on others, it is difficult to maintain over long periods of time. It is easy for anyone to recall being in a staff meeting, a class, or a conference and suddenly becoming aware that “My God, I’ve been daydreaming.” The body had enough and the mind turned off. When a person starts to get the “turn-off” signal, he or she should withdraw totally for a period of fifteen to thirty seconds—remember the vacation last summer; relive that recent triumph; once again deliver that devastating rejoinder...anything that makes it possible to leave the here and now totally for a short period of time. When the individual comes back into contact, it will be total contact, and he or she will be able to function effectively until the need to withdraw surfaces again. One cannot deal with the need to attend and the need to rest simultaneously. By trying to do both at the same time, one achieves neither. By finishing the one need (withdrawal) completely, the other need (contact) can then be dealt with much more fully. While this may seem awkward at first, a little practice will allow an individual to develop a sense of rhythm between contact and withdrawal that can sustain him or her for long periods of time when a maximum of concentration is needed.

10. *Clarity and Conciseness*

This concept embodies the preceding nine. First, until a person knows what he or she wants, there will be very little chance of getting it. Second, conciseness is necessary, implying brevity and the lack of qualifying statements preceding the demand. There is no better way of not getting what one wants than by preceding a request with something

like “You probably won’t like this but . . .,” or “I know that this might not sound like such a good idea but . . .,” and so on.

Internalizing these norms is not a cure-all but a way of starting the centering process that allows people to contact themselves and others more effectively. Unless these norms are internalized by group members, collaborative effort is only a substitute for the real thing.

THE GROUP

In addition to uniting and combining forces that may not have reached a minimum level of maturity, either as individuals or subgroups, another factor contributing to the failure of a collaborative effort is significant: pushing collaboration as a value when it may be violating assumptions of members who do not accept the collaborative model. An effective collaborative group is based on four underlying assumptions.

Enlightened Self-Interest

For a group to function effectively, it must not make inhuman demands on its participants. The individual’s question of “What’s in it for me?” is a very legitimate one that is also quite valuable for the group. I am not speaking disparagingly of altruism or *esprit de corps*; these can be valuable group assets. Individuals, however, will be most committed to solutions that provide them with most of what they want, in terms of themselves or in terms of the organization. Stifling self-interest is one way to prevent group members from contacting what is important for them. Many people will strongly distrust anyone whose only stated motivation is “to want to help” or “to want to do what is best for the group.” A person will feel what he or she feels and will want what he or she wants regardless of who says that he or she should or should not. An explicit norm that says “wanting what you want is OK” frees members to be “up front” and more in touch with the factors that are affecting the group’s existence.

Contact Based on Differences

This concept has been implicit throughout this discussion, but it should also be explicit, particularly in view of its impact on effective group functioning.

One point needs some cautionary emphasis here. Similarities exist along with differences; liking coexists with disliking; agreeing with disagreeing; fun with friction; and so on. The point is not to make a necessary virtue or “should” out of differences. It is just as necessary to the effective functioning of a group for the members to recognize points of honest agreement and similarity, where they exist, as it is to recognize the differences.

Effective interaction is based on awareness. That is, before contact can be considered, there must first be awareness, i.e., consciousness, that some need or want has arisen or some thing is of interest. Out of the awareness comes energy or excitement, which moves the individual toward the objective. The cycle is complete when the

individual has made contact with that objective. For example, as you read this you may suddenly become aware of the fact that you are thirsty. You put down your reading and get up to get a cold beer. When you have quenched your thirst, you are now ready to resume your reading. You have made effective contact with your environment by being aware and attending to your needs as they arose. Had you tried to ignore your thirst and continued to read, you would have become increasingly thirsty and increasingly less able to concentrate on your reading, thereby getting nothing of what you wanted.

Essentially, contact is based on *differences*, not on similarities (me and something that is not me—for example, me and ideas, me and other people, me and food, or even me and me, which is what increased self-understanding is all about).

In terms of group effectiveness, it is essential to focus on differentiation first, by heightening the differences that make each individual unique. Once differentiation has occurred, it is easier to see where everyone stands. This facilitates the integration that results in the final collaborative solution.

The Contract

If emphasis is placed on differences that exist among the members of a group and the necessity for heightening these differences, the question “How do we get our act together?” naturally arises.

Most of us have experienced the difficulties that can arise when trying to reconcile the real differences that occur among the individuals of a group trying to arrive at a collaborative solution.

The central concern when dealing with differences or a conflict of any kind is to make certain that all parties are clear and concise about what it is they want. The clearer an individual is about what he or she initially wants, the easier it will be for him or her to move from that position to a more suitable one should the situation change or some call for a new approach arise.

The contract is one method of approaching differences. The essence of an effective contract lies in the willingness to deal in the here and now with explicit factors. This is true whether the issue be task, maintenance, or something of a highly interpersonal nature.

The contract is highly specific; in reality, it is a demand-response system that is geared to a set time and circumstance with a specific outcome. According to Gestalt theory, each individual always has the option to respond to a demand with (1) “Yes, I will,” (2) “No, I won’t,” or (3) “Yes, I will, under the following circumstances.”

The participants must make their respective positions clear. One individual makes a demand of another. The demand must be highly specific in terms of exact behaviors, the time frame the contract covers, the specific outcome expected, and what, if anything, is offered in return. Once this is stated, the other participants now respond individually with one of the three choices already mentioned.

If everyone responds with “I will,” then the contract is made and the group can move on with the next order of business. However, if any one individual responds with

“I will, under the following circumstances . . .,” a counter contract is being offered, which begins the entire process all over again. If any individual’s response is “I will not,” then the group has several options.

The first is to drop the demand, the second is to look for another avenue of approach, and the third is to reconsider the advisability of continuing with a collaborative approach.

A contract broken or not totally fulfilled is more damaging than one never made. A contract is not an end in itself; it is a way to begin and/or proceed slowly.

Collaboration as a Situational Alternative

When choosing a collaborative approach, the first thing to consider is who should be included in the effort. Three guidelines can be suggested.

1. *Only individuals who are competent to contribute to the outcome* should be included. All too often individuals have been included in collaborative efforts for many reasons other than that of ability to contribute productively. For example, we may include everyone in the organization because we believe in collaboration as an organizational value; we may include everyone in a specific work unit because the decision will affect the entire unit; we may include the individual because he or she will feel rejected and left out if we do not. Clearly, without the ability or capability to contribute to a specific outcome, the individual’s input can only be neutral at best and damaging at worst.
2. *Only those individuals in the decision-making process who, in some way, will be responsible for the outcome* should be included. An individual can be asked for an opinion or for specific information, both of which can contribute to the final decision, and yet be reasonably excluded from participating in the final decision-making process. Any statement that starts with “I think” can be considered legitimate from any source; but any statement beginning with “we should” or “you should” is not legitimate unless the individual making it will be personally affected by the outcome of that decision. The point here is that, regardless of how competent an individual may be, if he or she will not be affected by the outcome, his or her “we should”/“you should” inputs take on the aspect of free advice.
3. *Only individuals who freely wish to collaborate* should be included. Herman (1974a) has pointed out that while collaboration, openness, and trust exist in organizations, so do competitiveness, defensiveness, and distrust. The extent to which one set of conditions pervades the organization is certainly going to be a factor in determining the “organizational climate.” It is highly unrealistic, however, to assume that any organization is ever going to function at either extreme.

Thus, even in the most zealously converted “Theory Y” organizations there is going to be some internal competition for position, status, or resource; some wariness on the

part of individuals when faced with new or unknown conditions; and some honest dislike for other people. Not recognizing these negative conditions is just not being in the here-and-now.

Some people do their best work as individuals, avoiding groups like the plague. Some individuals can turn out their best only under competition. Some people are “toxic” to others, yet are still highly capable of good job performance. To include people who, for whatever reason, do not accept collaboration is a good method for ensuring that the effort will be, to some degree, abortive.

Another factor to be taken into account is that an individual can be competent, responsible for the outcome, and supportive of collaborative effort but just not care, one way or the other, how a particular decision turns out. If an individual’s input is needed, it should be derived as quickly and concisely as possible, without forcing the person to sit through agonizing hours of debate, argument, conflict, etc., which will only tend to increase his or her boredom and make him or her less willing to collaborate on other issues in the future.

If no one wants to collaborate on the project, it is possible that the project should not be handled collaboratively, but individually. A total lack of commitment to a project brings up the question of the advisability of proceeding. If such a project must be undertaken, then any other approach, including an individual one, will probably be more productive than the collaborative one.

CONCLUSION

The critical issue is not which technique, approach, or theory is good or bad, but which of these can get the best results. As long as nothing is totally rejected as a possible alternative, then each individual can generate as many choices for himself or herself as he or she is capable of doing. As long as the individual is centered and willing to deal with what is happening now, he or she allows himself or herself the maximum opportunity for effectiveness.

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■ DEVELOPING COLLABORATION IN ORGANIZATIONS

Udai Pareek

“Collaboration” can be defined as the efforts of one or more people working with others toward the attainment of a common or agreed-on goal. The literature of experimental research on the subject of collaboration is growing. In such studies collaboration, or cooperation, usually is contrasted with competition. “Competition” can be defined as the efforts of one or more people working against others for the attainment of mutually exclusive goals. The basic difference between collaborative and competitive behavior is the perception of the goal. If the goal is seen as sharable, then collaborative behavior, that is, working with others for the attainment of the goal, generally results. If the goal is seen as unsharable, for example, a situation in which only one person can “win,” then rivalry, or competitive behavior, generally results.

FUNCTIONAL AND DYSFUNCTIONAL FORMS OF COOPERATION AND COMPETITION

Both collaboration (or cooperation) and competition can fall into two categories: one functional (or effective or positive) and the other dysfunctional (or ineffective or negative). We will use the terms Coll (+) and Coll (–) and Comp (+) and Comp (–) to indicate functional and dysfunctional, or positive and negative, collaboration and competition, respectively.

Comp (+) can be defined as a rivalry between two or more people for the attainment of a desired goal. If such competition is used to achieve excellence and to search for or create further challenges for oneself, it is functional or positive competition—Comp (+). Such competition contributes to the development of the sense of self-worth.

When a person focuses on a competitor and how the competitor can be prevented from attaining a goal, the interaction becomes negative—Comp (–). As Likert (1967) has often noted, if competition reduces a person’s feeling of self-worth, it is dysfunctional. Likert also gives the example of some salespeople who were motivated by this kind of competition. These salespeople withheld information about better methods of sales, new markets, and new sales strategies from their colleagues.

Similarly, collaboration can be either functional or dysfunctional. Functional collaboration, or Coll (+), can be defined as the tendency to contribute to the joint effort for faster and more effective goal attainment, resulting in mutual trust, respect, and

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concern. Such collaboration increases self-worth and contributes to the development of other desirable characteristics.

Coll (–) is the tendency to conform to others' demands in order to ingratiate oneself with them or to avoid or escape task stress or task demands. When a person collaborates with another person because the latter is more powerful, or in order to please the latter, such collaboration is also dysfunctional.

Both competition and collaboration are important and can be conceived as complementary qualities. However, they perform different functions. Figure 1 shows these various functions.

Competition Develops	Collaboration Develops
A sense of responsibility	Mutuality
A sense of identity	Alternative ideas and solutions
Internal standards	Mutual support and reinforcement
Excellence	Synergy
Individual creativity	Collective action
Individual autonomy	Supplementary expertise

Figure 1. Functions of Competition and Collaboration

THE ROLE OF COMPETITION

The main function of competition in an organization is to help a person to develop and attain his or her own identity. In this regard, competition serves the following purposes:

Developing a Sense of Identity

In order to be effective, one must develop his or her own identity and function as a person. The development of identity occurs as one realizes his or her own uniqueness, strengths, capabilities, and weaknesses by testing them in the environment with other people.

Developing a Sense of Responsibility

Unless a sense of responsibility is developed, a person's general competence and task involvement will be low. Responsibility includes a realistic assessment of how much one has contributed to a success or has been responsible for a failure. Competition helps to develop a sense of responsibility because it isolates a person to face the consequences of his or her own actions. If the person succeeds in a competitive situation, he or she attributes that success to his or her own efforts and abilities. Similarly, if the person fails, he or she analyzes and takes responsibility for that failure.

Developing Internal Standards of Behavior

When a person takes responsibility for the consequences of his or her actions, that person develops his or her own standards for evaluating what is done well and what needs to be done better. A person who engages in collaboration merely for the sake of conformity will place little value on the outcome, as the decision to cooperate was not based on his or her own values or standards of behavior. Competition, however, helps to develop such internal standards. Successful competitive experiences help one learn to assess what one wants to do, why one wants to do it, and how one views the outcome. This increases one's autonomy in setting goals and taking necessary steps for their attainment.

Developing Excellence

The most important result of competition is the development of a concern for excellence, or what has been called achievement motivation. The success that one achieves in relation to other people produces a desire for even greater success. This occurs not only in relation to the standards set by others but also in relation to one's own standards or past performance. There is a continuous process of self-competition. One who has done very well in the past often wants to excel even more and is, in fact, competing with oneself. Generally, the word "competition" is used in the context of relations with others. But the sense of competition that a person acquires from "outside" may also be internalized, and it promotes achievement motivation in which competition exists not only in relation to others but also in relation to one's own past behavior. When competition is used properly, it can develop a concern for excellence instead of a desire to pull another person down.

Developing Individual Creativity

Individual identity and a concern for excellence create a desire in a person to find his or her own new and unconventional ways of solving problems, of looking at things, and of acting on decisions. Positive competition often encourages the development of such individual creativity.

Developing Autonomy

Competition helps one to develop one's own ways of looking at problems and finding solutions. It helps one to be original, to think on one's own, and to develop one's own framework and way of doing things. Developing autonomy does not conflict with relating to others or with working for a larger cause. Because autonomy helps to maintain a person's identity, if properly used it can help people to respect one another's identities. Thus, individual autonomy can be maintained in a larger context in which people have to surrender their autonomy on some matters in order to work for a common goal. This leads us to the issue of how competition emerges in collaboration and the role of collaboration.

THE ROLE OF COLLABORATION

Competition by itself is a very important instrument in the development of a person, but it should complement and supplement collaboration. Likewise, collaboration supplements the learnings of competition and allows further personal development.

Building Mutuality

Collaboration helps to build relationships based on mutuality—recognizing the strengths of others and the contributions that other people can make and accepting these contributions. Such a relationship helps the people in an organization to develop respect for one another and to accept one another in a work situation. It also helps them to encourage the strengths of other people, to utilize those strengths, and to contribute to the further development of others.

Generating Ideas and Alternatives

In a collaborative relationship, people stimulate one another in thinking about problems and alternatives and in generating ideas, approaches, and solutions. Because several people may be involved, more ideas are generated than one single person could produce.

Building Mutual Support and Reinforcement

The collaborative relationship plays a significant emotional role by reinforcing members' efforts toward mutual support. In a collaborative situation, people receive immediate feedback from their colleagues, which helps them both to use this feedback as well as to give feedback to the others. In this continual process of feedback and support, successes are reinforced and the team is strengthened.

Developing Synergy

A collaborative relationship produces synergy, the multiplication of talents and resources in the group. Through this process of continual stimulation, the members achieve results beyond the total of all individual resources. This generation of more potent resources in the group has an effect of multiplying resources in an organization.

Developing Collective Action

When people work together in a group or team, their commitment to the goal—their courage to stand by that goal and take necessary action—is likely to be high. The difference in the behavior of a person in isolation and his or her behavior as a member of a team is evident in the case of trade unions, representative committees, and delegations. People act with more of a sense of power when they have several people behind them than they do when they present only their own points of view. This generates courage. The secret of success of a trade union in an organization lies in the strength of collective

action that it is able to generate. The higher the level of collaboration, the greater the strength the group will have for collective action.

Supplementing Expertise

The greatest advantage of collaboration is that people go beyond their own limitations, and one person's lack of expertise in a particular area does not keep the group from achieving its goals. The group's pool of strengths and expertise supplements the various individual contributions; as a result the collaborative group is able to generate multidimensional solutions and is not limited by a single person's approach to the problem.

COMPARING COMPETITION AND COLLABORATION

The discussion so far has shown the respective roles that collaboration and competition play in the organization. One is not always "better" than the other because in some instances competition is more functional while in others collaboration is called for. Much work in an organization is done in groups. These groups may be departments, interdepartmental committees, vertical role groups, or horizontal role groups such as the managers at a particular level. In many cases there may be informal collaborative groups in which two or more people work together on a problem. In most cases, most of the time, people work with other people and, therefore, are continually interacting in either a competitive or collaborative framework. In most such situations the collaborative framework is much more functional than the competitive one because these situations deal with organizations and problems: setting standards, searching for alternatives, and so on. Collaboration is therefore an extremely important dimension in organizational life; if an organization has a low level of collaboration, the possibility of solving multidimensional problems within the organization is rather low.

Many researchers—and those who have worked in the field of management—have reported that on the whole collaboration contributes to better development and has better side effects than competition. Likert (1967), analyzing various studies done with salespeople, reported that the most successful sales managers discovered and demonstrated that when a sense of personal worth and importance was used to create competitive motivational forces, the level of productivity and sales performance was not as high as was expected. It was very high, on the other hand, when motivational forces to cooperate rather than compete were used. The latter results included better performance, lower cost, higher levels of earnings, and much higher employee satisfaction. Likert concluded on this basis that collaboration releases motivational forces that develop people and contribute to the achievement of targets more effectively. Cartwright and Zander (1968), summarizing most of the research done since the famous research by Deutsch (1949) on cooperation and competition, reported that the basic conclusions drawn by Deutsch (that cooperation has a much higher payoff to the organization than does competition) were true in most of the studies surveyed.

Collaboration contributes to better communication, coordination of efforts, an increased climate of friendliness, and pride in one's own group. Cartwright and Sander concluded that these were important qualities for group effectiveness.

Because people increasingly are called to work together to solve multidimensional organizational problems, collaboration becomes very relevant. This study will examine how collaboration takes place and how it can be further developed in the organization. The first question, therefore, is why and how people collaborate. Once this is answered, we can proceed to the next issue: how collaboration should be managed.

BASES OF COLLABORATION

A great deal of research has been done on cooperation and collaboration. Experimental social psychologists have devised ways to study group relationships involving cooperation or collaboration. A frequent vehicle for study is an activity called "Prisoners' Dilemma" (Pfeiffer & Jones, 1974c), in which team members are required to make a move demonstrating either cooperation or competition with another team. If both teams make a cooperative move, they score equally. If one "tricks" the other, it gains points and the other loses points. But if the teams attempt to trick each other, they both lose points. The object is to compare chance scores resulting from competition with the slow but consistent gains resulting from collaboration. A number of studies (Pareek, 1977a) have been done on this structured interaction; some of this research is significant for understanding the bases of collaboration, some of the factors that contribute to collaboration, and the reasons that people collaborate.

Collaborative Motivation

There is a basic need in most human beings, called *extension motivation*, to relate to other people and to be helpful to them. This need is reflected not only in concern for another person but also in concern for larger groups, including the organization to which one belongs and the society at large. Extension motivation is the basis of collaboration. People who have high extension motivation will collaborate more than others. Extension motivation or any other motivation is not innate or inborn. It is a product of many forces, and other factors can contribute to raising or reducing the level of extension motivation. Most of these factors interact with one another; many reinforce others or have implications for others. If extension motivation operates, and if there is reciprocal motivation within the group (if the members of the group have concern for one another and are also concerned about the performance of the total group), the person's motivation is further reinforced. On the other hand, if other members do not demonstrate extension motivation, it will be reduced in individual members.

Group Norms

The norms that prevail in a group have a strong influence on the behavior of the members and can raise or lower motivation. A member with low extension motivation

may have a tendency to compete. However, if the collaborative norms in the group are high, this person's extension motivation will also increase in time. Norms are informally evolved; members implicitly agree with them, agree to conform to these standards of behavior, and expect others to conform to them.

Higher Payoff

Generally a person's behavior is dictated by perceived rewards. If one type of behavior is rewarded more (or has higher payoff), the person will repeat that behavior. It is worthwhile, therefore, to examine whether collaborative behavior is rewarded in an organization.

Pareek and Banerjee (1977) have found that competition is not highly correlated with achievement motivation. In the past, achievement motivation (concern for individual excellence and competition) was thought to have a high correlation with competitive behavior. The reason that this has not proved to be true seems to lie in the perceived payoff for competition. People with high achievement motivation are interested in results. If they perceive that by collaborating they can get better results, they are likely to collaborate; if they perceive that the results are better from competition, they are likely to compete. Even those who have a tendency to compete are likely to collaborate if collaborative behavior has a higher payoff. Collaborative behavior, for example, can lead to recognition, a chance to develop one's abilities, increased creativity, increased influence in the system, or perception of one's role as useful or contributing to a cause that is greater than individual interests. Such psychological payoff, in terms of motivation or role efficacy (Pareek, 1980), especially if it supplements a monetary or material payoff, is likely to reinforce collaborative behavior.

Superordinate Goals

Several factors contribute to the development of a superordinate goal. First, the goal should be attractive to the various members; it should be seen as desirable by all concerned.

Second, the goal should be seen as sharable (that is, all people or groups concerned can share it). If the perception is that one party can achieve a goal at the expense of the other party and that the nature of the goal is such that it cannot be achieved jointly by both parties, this situation is called a "zero-sum game," because the sum of the payoff to both parties is zero. All traditional sports are zero-sum games. In a football or hockey match, the goals secured by one team are the positive payoff; the team losing the game has a negative payoff. Adding the payoffs of both teams results in zero. However, within the same team, members play a "nonzero-sum game." The gain by different players within the same team contributes to the higher gain by all members. The sum total of payoff to the different members of the team can be on the plus or the minus side.

Third, if the situation is such that the goal cannot be achieved by a single person or a single group without working with others, the goal is superordinate. In traditional

sports, a team that is competing with other teams has the superordinate goal of getting a higher score than the other team. Within the team itself, members play a collaborative game because they perceive the superordinate goal. To all members, the goal of achieving victory is attractive; they see this as sharable and as nonzero-sum, and each member realizes that this cannot be achieved individually—they have to work together to achieve the goal.

When people involved in a situation see a goal as having all three elements described above, the goal is superordinate.

Sherif and Sherif (1953) have described some interesting experiments that demonstrate the value of superordinate goals and have contributed significantly to the understanding of cooperation. Experimental conflict and competition were first created in two groups of adolescents who were taken on a camping trip for several days. Situations were created in which the problems faced by both groups could not be solved by either group alone. It was found that the perception of the superordinate goals by both groups (involved at first in conflict and competition with each other) changed their behavior, and they later engaged in the maximum possible collaboration.

Perceived Power

Another condition that contributes to the development of collaboration in a group is the perception of power. Power can be of two kinds: reward and punishment. Punishment may take the form of depriving another person of reward. Everyone in the system has at least the negative power of depriving another person of something that is desirable to him or her. This may be done by holding back information, by misleading the other person, and so on. Even a person at the lowest level in the organization can use his or her negative power to create annoying situations, delay matters, hold back information, or give information that creates misunderstandings. Every person in the system has some kind of power. If people in the system perceive clearly that they have power that is positive in nature—that they may be able to contribute to and use their influence for the attainment of certain goals—they usually will use their power positively.

Similarly, it is important for people to realize that others who are involved in the situation also have power, both positive and negative. Such power should be not only perceived but also demonstrated. If people do not perceive the power of others, they are likely to use their own power in a competitive or exploitative manner. Pareek (1977a) has reported that unconditional cooperation does not lead to the development of collaboration. Unconditional cooperation by one party may communicate lack of power. If this happens, the other party will find it more and more difficult to enter into a collaborative relationship. For effective collaboration the perception of power of both (equality) is essential. This was dramatically demonstrated in one experiment in which the author was involved with four groups composed of educators from six Asian countries. These groups engaged in a structured activity called “Win As Much As You Can” (Pfeiffer & Jones, 1974c). The activity consisted of ten moves. One of the four groups consistently made cooperative moves and—as was revealed in the later interview

and discussion—was fully convinced that, looking at the nature of the game and the implicit rules, only cooperative behavior could help all of the groups to maximize their gains. However, the unconditional cooperation by this group blocked the emergence of cooperation among the other groups, and the first group was exploited by the others. The final result was that the cooperating group stopped communication with the other three groups; and the other groups also refused to negotiate, as they saw themselves in a powerful and advantageous position that could be threatened by negotiation. Other research has shown that cooperation emerges after some competitive moves by the groups concerned; in this process the various parties or individuals demonstrate to one another the power they have and their ability to use power. Research also has shown that a competitive move or a stalemate in a relationship can result in collaboration, particularly in situations in which the parties are competitive by nature. In situations in which the parties are collaborative by nature, a stalemate in negotiation or relationship works against collaboration. The implications of these findings seem to be that when there are highly competitive or noncooperative parties or people, demonstration of their power to one another helps to loosen the situation, and a stalemate may encourage the possibility of collaborating for mutual benefit.

Mutual Trust

Along with the perception of power, it is important that the parties concerned also perceive that the power of the other party will not be used against them. This is trust. Trust is indicative of the high probability that the power of the other party will not be used in a malevolent way. Some degree of mutual trust is likely to lead to cooperation.

As shown in Figure 2, collaboration results from a combination of the perceived power of both parties and a minimal amount of trust in each other. In a no-trust condition, there may be coercion and exploitation if one party is seen by the other party as weak, or submission or compliance if one party is seen by the other as having power. If the perception is that neither has power, there may be indifference to each other; the perception that both have power may lead to either competition or individualistic behavior. A high-trust perception of the partner who has *low* power may lead to nurturance (paternalistic behavior); the perception that the other *has* power may result in dependency; and the perception that *neither* has power may generate mutual sympathy. Collaboration emerges only when trust exists and both parties perceive, as well as clearly demonstrate, that both have power.

Figure 3 shows that collaboration results from three main factors: the perception that the goal is sharable, the perception that both (or all) involved have power, and a minimal level of trust prevailing among those involved in the task. Absence of these may result in low (or the absence of) cooperation. We thus see that trust interacts with both power and superordinate goal.

Perceived Power (Who Has the Power?)

		<i>Only 1</i>	<i>Only He/She</i>	<i>Neither</i>	<i>Both</i>
Trust	High	Coercion Exploitation	Submission Compliance	Indifference	Competition or Individualistic Task
	Low	Nurturance	Dependence	Mutual Sympathy	Cooperation

Figure 2. Cooperation as a Function of Perceived Power and Trust

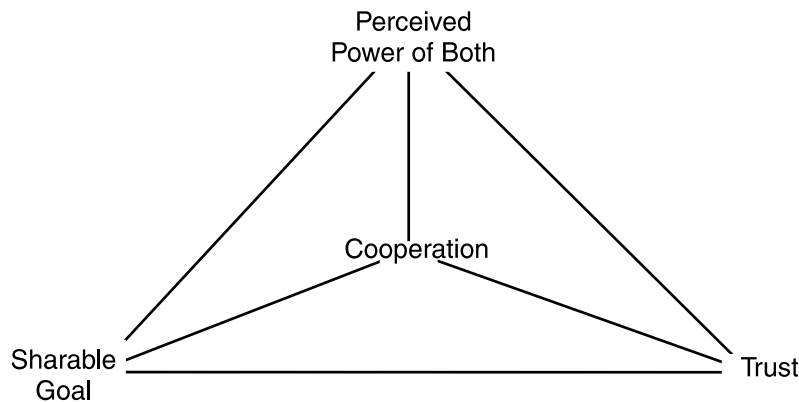


Figure 3. Cooperation as a Function of Sharable Goal, Perceived Power, and Trust

Communication

Another factor contributing to the development of collaboration is communication between the parties involved in the situation. Pareek and Dixit (1977) have reported the results of experiments conducted on adult groups that show the role of communication in the development of collaboration. These and various other experiments have demonstrated that when groups or representatives of groups have an opportunity to communicate with one another, the chances of collaboration increase. Communication also helps the groups to share their perceptions of one another's power and to discover that the power they have can be turned into a positive force for the benefit of all concerned. The experiments showed that communication tends to produce repentant behavior in those who have been exploiting or using power against others. Communication also helps in the development of trust. When groups communicate through representatives, it is important that the groups trust their representatives and that the representatives know their commitments will be honored by the group. Again, experiments have shown that when a group has trust and confidence in its representatives and honors the commitments made by them, collaboration becomes easier.

Fait Accompli

If groups or people live together and share certain norms, they begin to see good points in one another and collaboration begins to emerge. Various experiments aimed at reduction of conflict have employed this technique. People may be prejudiced against one another or have incorrect notions about one another when they do not work together or live together, but through sharing experiences they evolve common norms. When the people work together, it should be in a larger context so that they become members of a larger group. As part of a larger group to which they contribute, they develop new norms that encourage the development of better relationships. When competing groups or people become part of the same group, they slowly lose their identity as individual people or groups in a narrow sense and develop a new identity or sense of belonging to the larger group. This helps in the emergence of collaboration.

Risk Taking

In the final analysis, cooperation results from an initiative taken by one party to cooperate. This is a risk-taking behavior, and it makes that party vulnerable to some degree. In a nonzero-sum game the person or group that makes the cooperative move runs the risk of losing a great deal and of hiding a lower payoff. This risk, the initiative, demonstrating the courage to lose initially for the benefit of all concerned, is the key to the development of cooperation. However, it is only after mutual trust has been achieved and mutual power has been demonstrated that such risk taking is effective. At that point, the fact that one person or group takes the initiative to become vulnerable starts the process of change toward collaboration. The strength that enabled the person or group to make such a move helps to support the collaborative relationship. This is shown in Figure 4.

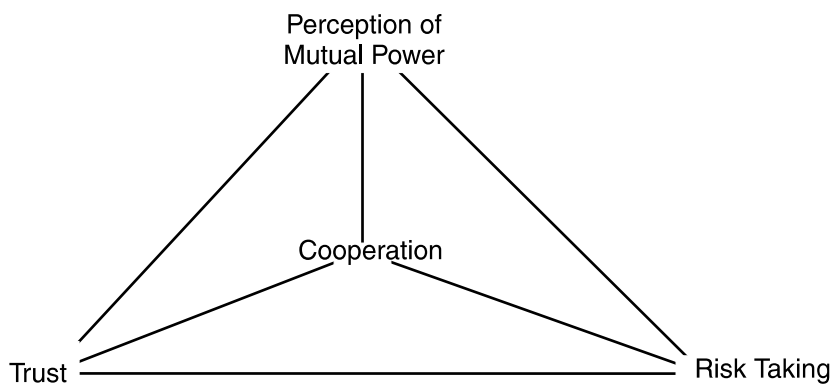


Figure 4. Cooperation as a Function of Individual Risk Taking

INTERVENTIONS TO BUILD COLLABORATION IN ORGANIZATIONS

Several interventions can be used to help raise the level of collaboration in organizations. The interventions discussed here can be classified as *process interventions* and *structural interventions*.

Process interventions focus on the basic processes that contribute to collaboration. They help to demonstrate the effects of collaboration. When people experience some dramatic effects of collaboration in a laboratory situation, they frequently are motivated to collaborate more effectively. Process interventions also help to increase awareness that collaboration is a complex phenomenon and that many conditions and processes promote conditions, so that they may be able to take appropriate actions. Finally, process interventions help people to look at themselves in a self-confrontive manner. If a person analyzes his or her own motivation and realizes that he or she has a tendency either to use collaboration in a minimal way or to use a dysfunctional type of collaboration, that person may be concerned enough to work toward developing collaborative motivation. In this way process interventions provide opportunities for individuals to experiment with new behavior, to explore what methods they can adopt for collaboration, and to see how collaboration helps in a particular situation. Such experiencing and experimenting constitute the basic approach to behavioral change.

While the main role of process intervention is to create motivation and release the process of collaboration, the main role of a structural intervention is to consolidate such change, make it a part of the organizational life, and ensure that the collaborative motivation that has been released is designed into the system and is sustained in the regular life of the organization. Structural interventions serve several functions. In the first place, they provide opportunities for people to actually collaborate in real-life situations. When people's motivation for collaboration is high, structural interventions provide them with opportunities to collaborate in order to sustain that motivation. Second, if collaboration is encouraged and rewarded, there will be a greater tendency for people to collaborate, so structural interventions create higher payoffs for collaboration in various forms, continually reinforcing collaborative efforts. In the third place, these interventions legitimize collaboration because they do not leave it to informal arrangements. By formalizing the ways in which people collaborate, the organization recognizes and communicates the value of collaboration; and this process of legitimization helps to make collaboration a regular part of organizational life. Finally, structural interventions help to establish norms of collaboration, making it clear that the organization expects people to collaborate. We have already said that such norms are important determinants of behavior; influencing behavior is an important role of structural interventions.

Figure 5 summarizes the various interventions that will be discussed here.

Bases of Collaboration	Related Interventions
Motivations	Motivation Development Laboratory Simulation Activities
Norms	Norm-Setting Exercises Developing Norms of Sharing Temporary Systems
Reinforcement	The Appraisal System Rewarding Collaboration
Superordinate Goals	Joint Goal Setting Organization Building
Power	Simulation Activities Open Sharing of Feelings Role Negotiation Role Erosion
Trust	Training Groups or Process Groups Nonverbal Exercises Simulation Activities
Communication	Simulation Activities Feedback System
Team Development	Team-Building Laboratories Data Feedback Sharing of Feelings Image Sharing Role Linkage Joint Problem-Solving Groups
Initiative	Process Analysis of Simulation Experiences Recognizing and Rewarding Initiative

Figure 5. Bases of Collaboration and Related Interventions

Motivation-Development Interventions

The development of collaborative motivation is aided by the development of the extension motive, which is characterized by concern for other people and a general feeling that one should be of some use to others. Two interventions can be used to develop extension motivation: a laboratory approach and a simulation activity.

Motivation-Development Laboratory

A laboratory of about one week's duration would be based primarily on the propositions suggested by McClelland and Winter (1969) for building motivation. An extension-motivation lab also can be organized along the lines suggested for a power-motivation

lab (McClelland & Burnham, 1976). The design for such a lab would include the following components:

- Helping participants to analyze their levels of extension motivation and whether they are satisfied with them;
- Helping them to analyze various aspects of their jobs and to what extent these jobs provide opportunities to use their extension motivation;
- Helping them to diagnose the organizational culture again to see what elements in the culture contribute to or work against extension motivation and collaboration;
- Helping them to analyze the norms prevailing in the organization to determine which norms promote collaboration and which work against it;
- Helping them to share their apprehensions about the consequences of cooperation; and
- Helping them to deal practically with such apprehensions and to see that collaboration can be a strength rather than a means of giving up some powers.

Collaboration eventually should be perceived as, and should in effect contribute to, the development of influence or power in people. Of course, this influence or power is of a particular nature; in the laboratory model, stage 4 of McClelland's (1975) concept of power should be used (Pareek, 1977b; Rao, 1976).

Simulation Activities

Simulations or structured activities also can be used to develop motivation for collaboration. One example is the activity "Win As Much As You Can" (Pfeiffer & Jones, 1974b), described earlier.

Norm-Building Interventions

Interventions can be used to develop norms of collaboration within the organization. Such behavioral standards sustain collaboration in the long run. The following three strategies are suggested in this regard.

Norm-Setting Exercises

De la Porte (1974) has suggested the development of group norms for team building. The interventions that de la Porte has suggested include building new norms by examining old norms, that is, creating understanding and appreciation of the significance of norms; establishing positive norm codes through cooperative normative-change priorities; developing a systematic change strategy by examining and modifying ten crucial areas that relate to norm setting; implementing the change strategy; providing follow-up and maintenance; and providing for continual evaluation of the change strategy.

Developing Norms of Sharing

If people in an organization continually, openly, and jointly share various problems that they face, discuss ideas about solutions, and develop strategies for action, norms for collaboration will develop. Such activities may be conducted both within departments and across departments. Norms cannot develop in an organization unless particular behaviors are established as desirable. Therefore, if collaboration is to result, steps must be taken to establish such norms and to reinforce them.

Temporary Systems

It may be useful to use temporary systems such as task groups, special problem-solving groups, or data-collection groups to solve various organizational problems or to work on specific tasks. Such a group is created for a specific purpose and as soon as that purpose is achieved, the group is dissolved. Usually such groups are composed of people from different departments, sections, or functions. The advantage of an interdisciplinary group is that members share concerns and thereby establish the norm of collaboration on common tasks. The more often such groups are used, the more the norm of collaboration will pervade the organization.

Reinforcing Interventions

Interventions can be used to reinforce collaborative behavior. When behavior is rewarded, it tends to be repeated. Two main interventions are suggested for this purpose.

The Appraisal System

Appraisal of employee performance and potential can be used to strengthen collaboration in an organization. One of the items to be appraised should be the person's contribution to team building and collaboration in the organization. When such an item is pinpointed, the person realizes that value is placed on such behavior and it becomes legitimized. This results in greater effort on the part of individual employees to consciously collaborate and contribute to teamwork. In due course, this helps to develop skills of, and eventually motivation for, collaboration. Similarly, while appraising the potential of a person for higher jobs, the employee's ability to develop a collaborative spirit to contribute to the development of subordinates may also be assessed.

Rewarding Collaboration

Some method of rewarding collaboration in an organization is helpful. The reward may be merely special mention or recognition. For example, if a team consisting of people from several departments or sections has achieved something remarkable, that achievement can be mentioned at board meetings, in the company newsletter, or in a special bulletin issued to describe successful collaborative efforts. Prizes can be given

for remarkable work done by teams of workers in relation to specific tasks, when collaboration is a part of such efforts.

Creating Superordinate Goals

As has been discussed, a superordinate goal should be attractive, should be seen as sharable, and should be seen as achievable only through collaborative effort. The following interventions may be used to establish superordinate goals.

Joint Goal Setting

If people from various departments and teams are involved in setting goals, the results are likely to be superordinate goals. In the joint goal-setting process it is important that the goals be defined jointly by the members and seen as worthwhile, attractive, and challenging by all concerned. Resources necessary to attain the goals may also be discussed during such meetings. This frequently occurs in the top levels of organizations; however, at the lower levels the process could be used much more frequently.

Redesigning Work

De (1977) has described this intervention in detail. The intervention essentially consists of redesigning work in which several skilled workers are involved. The redesign is achieved by creating autonomous work teams consisting of members with various skills. They set their own goals, use their own resources, and are responsible for their overall production. In this process they learn one another's skills and replace one another whenever necessary. They take over the task of managing the entire production process in their own group. As De has explained, this approach certainly leads to new problems and dimensions, but more creative ways of managing problems also emerge. For example, as a result of such collaboration, the role of the supervisor must be redesigned. Although there are several repercussions from such work redesign, it is an effective intervention for creating superordinate goals.

Organization Building

Several models of organization building are available. Although these could be called organization development (OD) efforts, they are more elaborate than usual; therefore, the term "organization building" is used. Two major interventions of this nature are those by Blake and Mouton (1964) and Likert (1961, 1967). These two major theories of organization design have been widely used, and the results have been reported from numerous organizations and countries.

Blake and Mouton developed the now-famous "managerial grid," in which several attempts are made to build an organization on the basis of collaborative effort. The major interventions in the grid approach relate to team building. Teams are built in the organizational structure vertically, horizontally, and diagonally. For example, in the

vertical slice, teams from various levels within the same department meet to collaborate on problems. In the horizontal slice, people at the same level from different departments come together to work on problems; in the diagonal slice, people from different departments and different levels meet together to build a team. These team-building efforts eventually lead to goal-setting processes and a reshaping of the organization, resulting in a collaborative effort throughout the organization.

Likert proposes a theory of four types of organizations, which he calls type 1, type 2, type 3, and type 4. These types, broadly speaking, can be labeled authoritarian-exploitative, authoritarian-benevolent, consultative, and participative. The main characteristics of the type-4 organization (the participative or ideal organization) relate to collaborative relationships. In a more recent book, Likert and Likert (1976) report new findings confirming that type-4 organizations can be built through emphasis on collaboration and team building. Out of ten items used to measure human organizational variables, six relate directly to collaboration.

Power-Related Interventions

Unless the people or groups involved in the relationship perceive that all concerned in the situation have power, collaboration cannot emerge. Several interventions can be used to create conditions in which people both perceive and increasingly have power in the system.

Simulation Activities

Several simulation activities or structured experiences such as “Win As Much As You Can” (Pfeiffer & Jones, 1974b) or “Broken Squares” (Pfeiffer & Jones, 1974a) involve power, as participants can withhold any help they can provide to the group; even a small piece withheld prevents the group from achieving the task. Such negative power can be converted into positive power for the attainment of a goal. These activities and others used to simulate competitive and collaborative behavior demonstrate the importance of power very dramatically.

Open Sharing of Feelings

One useful intervention to use in connection with a sense of loss of power or of not having enough power in the system is to allow and encourage people to openly share their feelings about being powerless. Sharing such concerns may help people to become aware that they do in fact have some power, and it is important that they recognize the areas in which they do have power. In most cases this perception is very important. Also, the open sharing of concerns and feelings may help to set norms of sharing in the group.

Role Negotiation

Two important interventions relate to roles. Harrison's (1971) intervention called "role negotiation" is very useful. In the role-negotiation intervention, people negotiate their roles on the basis of mutuality. The basic concept of role negotiation is that people have equal power in the system, and they can make demands in exchange for promises of help. Role negotiation effectively utilizes the fact that people have power of different kinds, can use their power positively by helping others, and in turn can demand functional help themselves.

Role Erosion

Another role-related intervention that can be used to increase power within various roles is called "role erosion" (Pareek, 1975, 1976). This activity helps those who feel that they do not have power in the system or that their power has been eroded as a result of reorganization or redesign of roles. The role occupants meet together and prepare maps to indicate in which areas their power has been eroded; they also identify areas of vacuum. After identifying specific areas in which their power seems to be less, they discuss how more power can be built into their roles or how some hidden power that the role occupant is not able to see may exist in the role. This exercise may lead to role negotiation for building more power.

All interventions that deal with power proceed on the basis that power is not a limited quantum. The more power is shared, the more it increases in the organization. It should be regarded as a multiplying entity. The main question is "How much power is needed in what areas by which role in order to be effective?"

Trust-Building Interventions

With the increasing application of the behavioral sciences to organizational matters, trust-building interventions have been more widely used, both with stranger groups and with organizational groups. The basic assumption behind trust-building interventions is that if one is helped to find out why one trusts or does not trust people, one will be able both to learn to trust and to generate trust in others. Three main interventions are worth mentioning in this area.

Training Groups or Process Groups

In the training group—or T-group as it is more widely known—individuals sit without any agenda and explore issues that may be predominant in the group. Through this process they explore their own personal and interpersonal orientations and help one another to look at their personal and interpersonal effectiveness as well as to plan to improve such effectiveness. The T-group explores the various dimensions of trust building and helps members to test how trust can be built in the group. T-groups generally comprise part of a stronger laboratory setting. If the culture of the organization is fairly closed, the use of the T-group may create problems. But T-groups or process

groups have been used effectively to create more trust among members and to build norms of trusting behavior within the organization.

Nonverbal Exercises

More recently, nonverbal exercises have been widely used for building trust. One such exercise is what is called a “trust walk.” Half of the members of a group are blindfolded, and each blindfolded person forms a pair with one who is not blindfolded. The latter accompanies the former for several hours and in some cases for the whole day. The person without the blindfold leads the blindfolded one around, helping him or her to go for lunch, to attend to various other necessities, and to explore the environment. Sometimes this experience is very dramatic and has a tremendous impact on people in building trust. Some prework on personal relationships and interpersonal dimensions may need to be done before such a nonverbal exercise is used.

Simulation Activities

Several simulation activities have been used for building trust, especially the “Prisoners’ Dilemma” (Pfeiffer & Jones, 1974c). This and “Win As Much As You Can” (Pfeiffer & Jones, 1974b) have both been discussed previously.

Communication Interventions

Collaboration increases when communication channels are open. In an emotionally charged situation when there is some kind of stalemate as a result of negative competition, communication can become blocked and the relationship can degenerate into a lose-lose situation. At such a point communication becomes extremely important. Two interventions are useful in establishing helpful communication.

Simulation Activities

Simulation activities dramatically bring out the usefulness of communication, as mentioned earlier.

Feedback System

Another important way to keep communication open is to encourage giving and receiving negative feedback. In a face-to-face situation, if such feedback is allowed and encouraged, communication channels will continue to remain open. This can be done by legitimizing process review and feedback in a collaborative project from time to time. For example, an hour or so per week can be set aside for sharing feelings and other concerns that various group members have in relation to the work being done.

Team-Development Interventions

Team building is most important because it leads directly to collaboration. A variety of structural and process interventions have been used for this purpose.

Team-Building Laboratories

Special programs for team building are often developed for specific organizations. Alban and Pollitt (1973), for example, have developed what they call a “team building group. They contrast the team-building group with the T-group mainly on the basis that team building is done in the organization with members who will work continually with one another and that more structured activities are used. Although the team-building program is more structured in nature, process data are analyzed. Various simulation activities, theoretical inputs, and task work are used in a four-to-five-day program. The authors report effective changes as a result of such team-building activity.

Several team-building laboratories have been reported by other authors. All of these, whether they emphasize process or rely more on structured material, aim at creating teams of people who have respect for one another and who emerge with strengthened collaborative relationships.

Data Feedback

Team building can also be promoted when data collected by an outside consultant from interviews with various organizational members are used as the basis for the team-building activities. This intervention has been found to be especially useful for top-management team building. The consultant interviews each person who will participate in the team-building program and then writes all of the data anonymously on sheets of newsprint. These sheets are posted on the walls before the meeting starts. The feedback from the interviews helps to stimulate discussions about the problems faced by the group and deliberations about how the team building could be attempted.

Sharing of Feelings

Team building is facilitated when people are allowed to share their feelings about what happens in their groups or in the organization. Even when role negotiation has taken place, there may be residual, unexpressed feelings. Legitimizing discussions of the dimensions generated by sharing of such feelings helps in promoting team building and should be practiced regularly whenever special teams are working on projects.

Image Sharing

This intervention was originally suggested by Blake, Shepard, and Mouton (1964) for increasing role effectiveness. Essentially, the members generate images that they have of one another or of other groups and predict what image the other members or groups have of them. These images are shared. The rationale behind this intervention is that the

negative images that people have of one another get in the way of working together. So before mutuality can be established and teamwork can be developed, it is necessary that these images be both shared and cleared.

Role Linkage

One very effective team-building intervention is role linkage (Pareek, 1975). Various role occupants come together to determine the amount of linkage existing among their roles. By analyzing such role linkages (an instrument can also be used for this purpose), members become aware of where role linkages are weak and can then work to improve the linkages, leading to team development.

Joint Problem-Solving Groups

Another effective intervention is to set up groups that have joint responsibility for solving certain problems. The organizational problems should be urgent, and most of the members should be concerned about them.

Initiative-Promoting Interventions

As has been discussed, collaboration develops when someone takes the initiative and the risk to cooperate and opens a way to establish a collaborative relationship. This can be promoted in various ways.

Process Analysis of Simulation Experiences

Simulation activities provide data that can lead to understanding why there was a change toward collaboration. For example, it may be that some individuals took the initiative to turn the situation in a positive direction. This kind of process analysis generally can be done with good results.

Recognizing and Rewarding Initiative

It is also important that the initiative taken by a member or a group to establish collaboration is both recognized and rewarded. This will help to set norms of recognizing collaboration as well as to set examples that others can follow.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we can say that to build collaboration in organizations it may be useful to treat collaboration and competition as complementary phenomena and to work toward the development of functional (positive) forms of both. Understanding the bases of collaboration (why people collaborate) may help in designing both structural and process interventions in an organization. The interventions suggested here can be applied in a wide range of organizations.

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■ NEGOTIATION TODAY: EVERYONE WINS

Beverly Byrum-Robinson

The large number of books, journals, articles, tapes, seminars, and workshops on negotiation attests to the growing popularity of the subject. Three major factors contribute to the increasing recognition of the importance of negotiation: (1) negotiation “stars,” (2) a shift in power, and (3) negotiation as an alternative to conflict.

1. *Negotiation Stars*. High-powered negotiators are admired for making “megadeals” and have thrust the process and skill of negotiation into the limelight. People like Gerard Nierenberg—himself a successful negotiator—are making money by teaching and sharing their experiences with others.

2. *Shift in Power*. As organizational power has been shifting from dictatorial to democratic, more and more people have been seeing a need for effective negotiation skills. Consequently, negotiation courses, seminars, and workshops have sprung up for virtually every need, including those for buyers, sellers, managers, health professionals, school administrators, and women, as well as the more traditionally addressed courses for labor and international negotiators. Even computers are being used to effect more equitable conflict resolution.

3. *Alternative to Conflict*. Negotiation, in its broadest implication, is seen as an alternative to conflict and strife at interpersonal, organizational, and international levels. Because of the importance of negotiation—in some cases, a life-or-death matter—we should consider the meaning of “winning.” Waitley (1985) gave a new view of winning:

Our former basis for defining winning, according to external standards set by a hedonistic, egocentric, highly impressionable society is being transformed. The new view of winning is based on internal standards which, while differing for each individual, are consistent in that they take into account moral and spiritual values and principles that affect all of humankind and the natural world. (p. 30)

This article addresses the need to understand and practice negotiation skills. It defines negotiation, distinguishes it from other responses to conflict situation, and discusses the critical negotiation elements. The conclusion explores current trends and implications for HRD (human resource development) professionals.

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DEFINITION

Minimally, negotiation is a process by which two or more parties, each with its own goals and perspectives, coordinate areas of interest through concession and compromise to reach agreement and take jointly decided action about areas of common concern in a situation in which neither side has or wants to use complete power. Ideally, negotiation will produce a wise agreement and will improve—or, at least, not damage—the relationship of the parties.

To define negotiation properly, one needs to distinguish it from arbitration and mediation. *Arbitration* uses a third party to intervene. When the parties submit a dispute to an arbitrator, they agree to comply with the arbitrator's decision. *Mediation* also uses a third party, but the mediator has no authority to make a binding decision. The mediator facilitates a decision by listening, guiding, suggesting, and persuading the parties. Although multilateral negotiation may require a third party, this article focuses on negotiation between two parties.

CRITICAL ELEMENTS

Six major elements are common to all negotiations: the approach and outcome, the issues at stake, the negotiators, their relationship, the communication process, and the context.

Approach and Outcome

The outcomes of negotiation depend on the approach taken and the options that have been generated, considered, and synthesized in arriving at a final agreement. Four possible approaches are win-lose, lose-win, win-win, and mixed.

Win-Lose. Win-lose negotiation is characterized by each party's seeking its own advantage, usually to the detriment of the other party. This is the win-at-all-costs approach.

Lose-Win. A party may go into the negotiation with plans to yield to pressure. In the lose-win approach, one party seeks the acceptance of the other side regardless of the costs to itself. This is the peace-at-any-price approach.

Win-Win. Win-win negotiation is characterized by each party's seeking an agreement that provides joint gain. This is the everyone-a-winner approach.

Mixed. In a mixed approach, each party tries to be realistic. Both parties realize that usually one party wins more than does the other.

Issues

The issues include the interests that are at stake, the real or perceived conflicting positions that each negotiator takes, the best alternative to a negotiated agreement (BATNA), and the bottom line (the point at which the negotiator will walk away).

Interests and Positions. Each party enters the negotiation with the belief that its interest cannot be achieved without some cooperation from the other party. The negotiators take explicit positions, but their interests are often implicit. While the surface conflict in negotiation stems from the stated positions, a more serious conflict may stem from differences in interests. However, if interests are carefully discussed and explored, they may not be as far apart as the stated positions.

Needs. Essential human needs, such as security, affiliation, self-esteem, and recognition are at the base of all negotiation. Needs (that is, what is essential in the outcome) can be distinguished from wants (what is desirable but not necessary in the outcome). The combination of needs and wants contribute to the strategy and tactics that each negotiator uses.

Bottom Lines and Alternatives. Issues involve each party's bottom line (that is, its walk-away point). An alternative to a bottom line that saves the negotiator both from accepting unfavorable terms and from rejecting terms that would be beneficial is the BATNA. A way to discover a BATNA is to ask, "What will I do if I cannot get what I want?" For example, if purchasing a new personal computer is not possible, the alternative could be upgrading an old computer, leasing a new one, using someone else's, or delaying the purchase until a specified time. To arrive at the BATNA, one must identify one of the alternatives as being the best.

THE NEGOTIATORS

This section examines the negotiator profile—that is, the attributes that are necessary for a successful negotiator. These include personality, knowledge, mental and communication skills, and negotiation style.

Personality. Negotiators need moral and intellectual attributes. Necessary moral attributes include patience and self-restraint, objectivity, dedication or commitment, courage, honesty, integrity, perseverance, courtesy, and the ability to harmonize. Intellectual attributes include wisdom, a clear and analytical mind, creativity, general intelligence, and leadership ability. Also, high self-esteem supports a negotiator's sense of confidence and competence.

Knowledge and Skills. Natural abilities need to be supplemented by several skills, including an understanding of human behavior. The negotiator also needs knowledge in the areas that are being negotiated and the ability to identify the issues, to perceive power, and to prepare and plan strategy and tactics.

Also required are excellent communication skills in the areas of argument and persuasion. Important interpersonal skills include the ability to express strong feelings appropriately and rationally, to be assertive rather than aggressive, and to listen attentively and actively.

Style. Although negotiators' styles stem primarily from personality predilection, various styles can be learned and adapted to expand their repertoire. The style used depends a great deal on the approach a negotiator takes. For example, if the negotiator has a win-lose approach, he or she is likely to be confident, impatient, and/or competitive.

RELATIONSHIP

When two negotiators come together, they form a relationship that comprises power, duration, and relationship style.

Power

The power in the relationship is not constant. Both parties can increase power, and an increase on one side does not necessarily mean a decrease for the other party. The following power paradoxes have been seen in the negotiation relationship (Bacharach & Lawler, 1986):

1. *Power is based on giving.* Providing the other party with benefits makes that party dependent on the one who is making the concessions, because a better deal may not be available outside this negotiation.
2. *To use power is to lose it.* Coercive action leads to reciprocal threats and/or compliance with resentment. If the "victim" holds a grudge, he or she may either "get back" or terminate the relationship. Neither of those actions is a favorable consequence for the negotiator who used the coercive tactics.
3. *The manipulation of power may have integrative effects.* If power is gained by giving, the other negotiator may reciprocate the giving or concession making, thus moving the negotiation toward a mutual, joint gain.
4. *An inferior power position can provide a tactical advantage.* If commitment to the negotiation is low, the more highly committed will yield to the lower committed, because there is more for the highly committed party to lose by walking away from the negotiation.

These paradoxes imply that short-term gains can lead to long-term losses. In fact, it has been suggested that an ongoing relationship should be the second most desirable outcome in a negotiation (Wall, 1985; Fisher & Ury, 1981). The most desirable outcome is, of course, a substantive agreement.

Duration

Trust is a rich concept in practical negotiations: the longer the relationship, the more opportunity to build trust; and the higher the trust, the easier it is to negotiate openly, flexibly, and creatively. Fisher and Ury's (1981, p. 55) negotiation dictum, "Be hard on

the problem, soft on the people,” points to the importance of the working relationship between the negotiators.

Style

The perception of trust and the perception of agreement are important dimensions of relationship style. Block (in Copeland, 1990) developed the following five styles from these two dimensions:

1. *High Agreement, High Trust.* With these two dimensions, the negotiating parties are *allies*. They will find it most effective to affirm the agreement and the quality of the relationship, to acknowledge any doubts, and to consult each other for advice and support.
2. *High Agreement, Low Trust.* In this case the parties are *bedfellows*. They find it most effective to reaffirm the agreement, to determine what each party wants, to acknowledge cautiousness, and to establish procedures for working together.
3. *Low Agreement, Low Trust.* These parties are obviously *adversaries*. With them, it is most effective for each party to establish its own position without making demands, to understand the other’s position, to acknowledge its own responsibility in the problem, and to conclude with detailing its plans of action.
4. *Somewhere Between High Agreement, Low Trust and Low Agreement, Low Trust.* These are *fence sitters*. It is most effective for them to determine where each stands and to urge each other to think about the issues.
5. *Low Agreement, High Trust.* These negotiators are *opponents*, and their most effective move is to affirm the quality of the relationship, to determine each side’s position, and to use creative problem solving to reach an outcome.

These styles are illustrated in Figure 1 on the next page.

THE PROCESS

Negotiation stages, strategies, and tactics constitute the negotiation process.

Stages

Although negotiation is a moment-by-moment process, the stages through which it proceeds are identifiable: simply prenegotiation, negotiation, and postnegotiation—each of which is divided into substages.

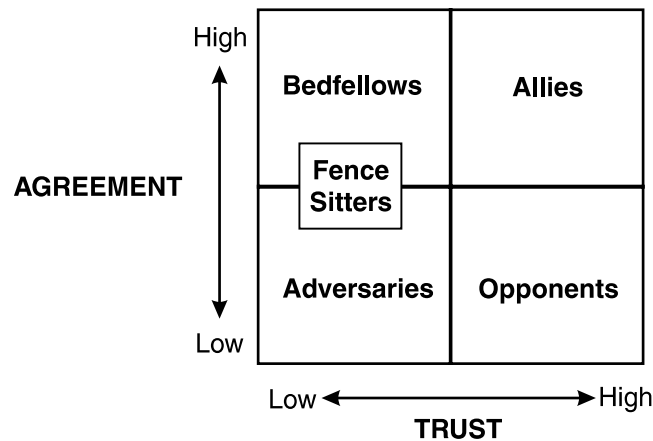


Figure 1. Negotiation Relationship Styles

Prenegotiation. The subphases of this stage are preconference negotiation and preparation. Preconference negotiation involves setting the requirements of the negotiation and selecting the site. The parties must agree on the general issue or purpose and the initial negotiation objectives for each party. Site selection can be critical because of the advantages and disadvantages of particular sites. For example, “your place” means unfamiliarity with surroundings for one party, but it also gives that party the ability to delay action because of lack of access to superiors. “My place” makes it difficult for the host to walk out, but it provides easy access to experts, superiors, and information. A neutral “some place” might complicate the picture with a third party, but it could ease tension regarding territorial problems. “No place” is also possible; that is, teleconferencing and other types of technological forms of communication. The no-place site may allow time to respond but eliminates the ability to read nonverbal language.

Preparation can be a year-round process. It includes self-preparation for the negotiator, establishing one’s objectives, and attempting to determine the other party’s objectives.

Negotiation. This stage begins when the parties actually meet together to do business or at least to discuss the issues at hand. The subphases are climate setting, orientation, opening, conflict, bargaining, and agreement.

Although the *climate* depends on the approach the negotiators take, it should be polite and cooperative, because this is the most effective climate. The negotiator’s *orientation* should be flexible, and neither party should reveal its BATNA. The *opening* can begin with a statement of position or a statement of interests.

Conflict will occur regardless of how the other subphases are positioned, because negotiation always involves some real or perceived conflict. To avoid a stalemate, the negotiators will begin *bargaining*. Generally the negotiators will bargain a number of times before *agreement*, or the closing, is reached. In the agreement subphase, the parties move from a crises point to cohesion.

Postnegotiation. The final stage ensures implementation of the agreement. The formal contract is written, approved, and administered. In some cases, closure may be episodic and renegotiating will be needed.

Strategy and Tactics

The distinctions between *strategy* and *tactics* are blurred. However, the strategy can be seen as the overall game plan that the negotiator follows in achieving his or her goals, whereas tactics are the specific actions used to effect the strategy (Calero & Oskam, 1983). In other words, strategy is the use of tactics to achieve an end.

The broadest categories of tactics are *rational* and *irrational*. Rational tactics (see Figure 2) are those designed by the negotiator to provide a positive outcome and include debate and bargaining. There are three types of debate tactics: structural, competitive, and joint problem solving.

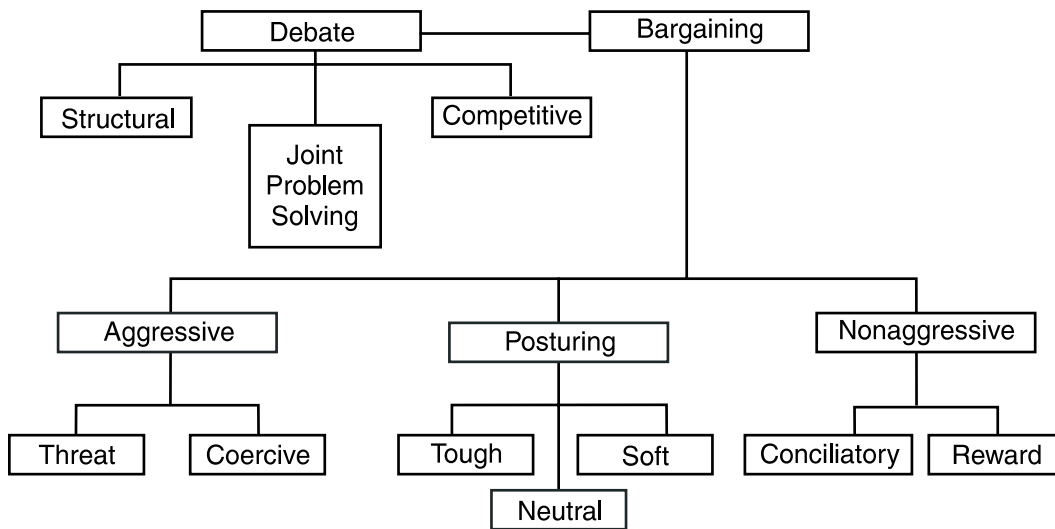


Figure 2. Rational Tactics

The largest category of rational tactics (bargaining) is used to alter the other party's behavior. It can be divided into aggressive, nonaggressive, and posturing tactics. The hostile, aggressive tactics are generally threat and coercion. Nonaggressive bargaining allows the parties to use conciliatory and reward tactics. Posturing tactics are used to alter the perception of the negotiator and the behavior that was probably planned. Tough posturing is used to give the appearance of strength; soft posturing, to influence cooperation and respect; and neutral posturing, to allow the negotiator to be inscrutable.

NEGOTIATION CONTEXT

Because the negotiation context refers to the immediate environment, the site selection is very important in the preparation phase of negotiation. However, there will be external environmental influences that are beyond the negotiator's immediate control.

These include legal, social, economic, and political influences. The negotiators must be aware of these influences and the impact that they could make on the negotiation process and outcome.

TRENDS

A review of experimental and theoretical research and of the basic negotiation elements indicates a movement toward win-win negotiation. Roth and Schoumaker (1983) contend that fostering common outcome expectations between negotiators encourages reaching agreement. In replying to an experiment of noncooperative strategies in which buyers met the demands of sellers, Neelin, Sonnenschein, and Spiegel (1988) and Binmore, Shaked, and Sutton (1988) explain that if the proper environment is established, *games* people can be replaced by *fair* people.

In reviewing experimental, computer-simulation, and international studies about useful strategies for gaining cooperation, Patchen (1987, p. 182) discovered a “remarkable convergence of findings.” While unconditional cooperation drew exploitation and coercion drew fighting, reciprocity strategies were most effective in gaining cooperation. In linking theory to field research, Tracy and Peterson (1986) discovered that integrative bargaining (win-win) tactics were also useful for distributive (win-lose) bargaining, but the reverse was not true. Furthermore, integrative bargaining tactics were recommended because they have the potential to expand alternatives and increase outcomes for both parties. This study reinforced the importance of a trusting and respectful relationship built on clarity, openness, and suspending commitment while options are being explored.

HRD IMPLICATIONS

The trend toward accepting the win-win approach as superior has some implications for HRD professionals. They would benefit in several dimensions from knowing and practicing this negotiation orientation.

1. As the call for empowerment grows stronger, more and more people in organizations are profiting from negotiation-skills training. Because HRD professionals often act as instructors, they need to know how to explain to others that negotiation is not only an interpersonal process but a learnable skill. Although all organizational levels can benefit from negotiation-skills training, management is particularly in need of these skills. Negotiation is becoming a way of life for managers, and a good percentage of the manager’s time is spent in negotiating—with superiors, subordinates, colleagues, customers, competitors, and vendors. Brooks and Odiorne (1984) herald negotiation as the “new nineties management style.”
2. Since HRD professionals are expected to be proficient in all interpersonal skills, they obviously need to have negotiation skills. However, these competencies can

also help the HRD professional in taking his or her rightful place at the executive level and in becoming involved in the organization's strategic planning. The HRD professional needs to know how to negotiate for his or her own special interest, for the long-term human needs of the organization, and for the overall business objectives.

3. Strong corporate cultures practice more win-win than win-lose negotiating. Because the creation and maintenance of a healthy corporate culture comes under the auspices of organizational development and value-based strategic planning, HRD professionals need to promote and practice cooperative organizational behavior. They must model a win-win attitude, which consists of openness, receptivity, integrity, flexibility, and creativity.
4. A background in negotiation can lead to new organizational roles for the HRD professional. Organizational mediators and corporate ombudspersons are emerging in organizations, with more new roles likely to follow.
5. Effective negotiation can facilitate the establishment of partnerships and networks, both of which are important to the HRD professional's need to move ideas through the organization and to pave the way for change.
6. On a personal level, the HRD professional's ability to negotiate from a win-win stance can improve relationship both on the job and away from work. Human resource development emphasizes a balanced life, and improvement of one's personal relationships can only benefit all other areas of an HRD professional's life.

CONCLUSION

The time for cooperation has arrived. The win-win approach to negotiation, requiring a repertoire of practical skills, is gaining wide acceptance. Because win-win negotiation is more time consuming than unilateral decision making, some believe that it is a weak approach. However, it allows negotiators—who traditionally regard each other as adversaries—to share and understand interests, to build a relationship, and to explore options and make commitments that produce joint mutual gain. Win-win negotiation may not be a perfect process; it is, however, better than the alternatives.

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■ CONFLICT-RESOLUTION STRATEGIES

Joan A. Stepsis

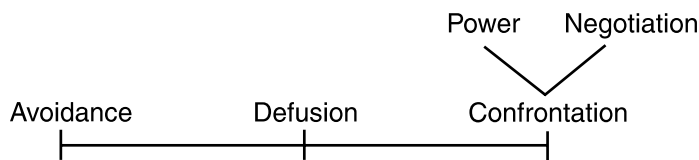
Conflict is a daily reality for everyone. Whether at home or at work, an individual's needs and values constantly and invariably come into opposition with those of other people. Some conflicts are relatively minor, easy to handle, or capable of being overlooked. Others of greater magnitude, however, require a strategy for successful resolution if they are not to create constant tension or lasting enmity in home or business.

The ability to resolve conflict successfully is probably one of the most important social skills that an individual can possess. Yet there are few formal opportunities in our society to learn it. Like any other human skill, conflict resolution can be taught; like other skills, it consists of a number of important subskills, each separate and yet interdependent. These skills need to be assimilated at both the cognitive and the behavioral levels (i.e., Do I understand how conflict can be resolved? Can I resolve specific conflicts?).

RESPONSES TO CONFLICT SITUATIONS

Children develop their own personal strategies for dealing with conflict. Even if these preferred approaches do not resolve conflicts successfully, they continue to be used because of a lack of awareness of alternatives.

Conflict-resolution strategies may be classified into three categories—avoidance, diffusion, and confrontation. The accompanying figure illustrates that avoidance is at one extreme and confrontation is at the other.



A Continuum of Responses to Conflict Situations

Avoidance

Some people attempt to avoid conflict situations altogether or to avoid certain types of conflict. These people tend to repress emotional reactions, look the other way, or leave

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the situation entirely (for example, quit a job, leave school, get divorced). Either they cannot face up to such situations effectively, or they do not have the skills to negotiate them effectively.

Although avoidance strategies do have survival value in those instances where escape is possible, they usually do not provide the individual with a high level of satisfaction. They tend to leave doubts and fears about meeting the same type of situation in the future, and about such valued traits as courage or persistence.

Defusion

This tactic is essentially a delaying action. Defusion strategies try to cool off the situation, at least temporarily, or to keep the issues so unclear that attempts at confrontation are improbable. Resolving minor points while avoiding or delaying discussion of the major problem, postponing a confrontation until a more auspicious time, and avoiding clarification of the salient issues underlying the conflict are examples of defusion. Again, as with avoidance strategies, such tactics work when delay is possible, but they typically result in feelings of dissatisfaction, anxiety about the future, and concerns about oneself.

Confrontation

The third major strategy involves an actual confrontation of conflicting issues or persons. Confrontation can further be subdivided into *power* strategies and *negotiation* strategies. Power strategies include the use of physical force (a punch in the nose, war); bribery (money, favors); and punishment (withholding love, money). Such tactics are often very effective from the point of view of the “successful” party in the conflict: that person wins, the other person loses. Unfortunately, however, for the loser the real conflict may have only just begun. Hostility, anxiety, and actual physical damage are usual byproducts of these win/lose power tactics.

With negotiation strategies, unlike power confrontations, both sides can win. The aim of negotiation is to resolve the conflict with a compromise or a solution that is mutually satisfying to all parties involved in the conflict. Negotiation, then, seems to provide the most positive and the least negative byproducts of all conflict-resolution strategies.

NEGOTIATION SKILLS

Successful negotiation, however, requires a set of skills that must be learned and practiced. These skills include (1) the ability to determine the nature of the conflict, (2) effectiveness in initiating confrontations, (3) the ability to hear the other’s point of view, and (4) the utilization of problem-solving processes to bring about a consensus decision.

Diagnosis

Diagnosing the nature of a conflict is the starting point in any attempt at resolution through negotiation. The most important issue which must be decided is whether the conflict is an ideological (value) conflict or a “real” (tangible) conflict—or a combination of both. Value conflicts are exceedingly difficult to negotiate. If, for example, I believe that women should be treated as equals in every phase of public and private life, and you believe they should be protected or prohibited in certain areas, it would be very difficult for us to come to a position that would satisfy us both.

A difference of values, however, is really significant only when our opposing views affect us in some real or tangible way. If your stand on women’s place in society results in my being denied a job that I want and am qualified to perform, then we have a negotiable conflict. Neither of us needs to change his values for us to come to a mutually acceptable resolution of the “real” problem. For example, I may get the job, but in return agree to accept a lower salary or a different title or not to insist on using the all-male executive dining room. If each of us stands on his principles—maintaining our value conflict—we probably will make little headway. But if, instead, we concentrate on the tangible effects in the conflict, we may be able to devise a realistic solution.

The Israeli-Arab conflict provides a good example of this point. In order to settle the tangible element in the conflict—who gets how much land—ideological differences do not need to be resolved. It is land usage that is the area of the conflict amenable to a negotiated settlement.

It is important to determine whether a conflict is a real or a value conflict. If it is a conflict in values resulting in nontangible effects on either party, then it is best tolerated. If, however, a tangible effect exists, that element of the conflict should be resolved.

Initiation

A second skill necessary to conflict resolution is effectiveness in initiating a confrontation. It is important not to begin by attacking or demeaning the opposite party. A defensive reaction in one or both parties usually blocks a quick resolution of differences. The most effective way to confront the other party is for the individual to state the tangible effects the conflict has on him or her. For example: “I have a problem. Due to your stand on hiring women as executives, I am unable to apply for the supervisory position that I feel I am qualified to handle.” This approach is more effective than saying, “You male chauvinist pig—you’re discriminating against me!” In other words, confrontation is not synonymous with verbal attack.

Listening

After the confrontation has been initiated, the confronter must be capable of hearing the other’s point of view. If the initial statement made by the other person is not what the confronter was hoping to hear, defensive rebuttals, a “hard-line” approach, or explanations often follow. Argument-provoking replies should be avoided. The

confronter should not attempt to defend himself or herself, explain his or her position, or make demands or threats. Instead, the confronter must be able to engage in the skill termed reflective or active listening. He or she should listen and reflect and paraphrase or clarify the other person's stand. When the confronter has interpreted the opposition's position to the satisfaction of the other person, he or she should again present his or her own point of view, being careful to avoid value statements and to concentrate on tangible outcomes. Usually, when the confronter listens to the other person, that person lowers his or her defenses and is, in turn, more ready to hear another point of view. Of course, if both people are skilled in active listening, the chances of successful negotiation are much enhanced.

Problem Solving

The final skill necessary to successful negotiation is the use of the problem-solving process to negotiate a consensus decision. The steps in this process are simply stated and easy to apply:

1. *Clarifying the problem.* What is the tangible issue? Where does each party stand on the issue?
2. *Generating and evaluating a number of possible solutions.* Often these two aspects should be done separately. First, all possible solutions should be raised in a brainstorming session. Then each proposed solution should be evaluated.
3. *Deciding together (not voting) on the best solution.* The one solution most acceptable to all parties should be chosen.
4. *Planning the implementation of the solution.* How will the solution be carried out? When?
5. *Finally, planning for an evaluation of the solution after a specified period of time.* This last step is essential. The first solution chosen is not always the best or most workable. If the first solution has flaws, the problem-solving process should be begun again at Step 1.

Since negotiation is the most effective of all conflict-resolution strategies, the skills necessary to achieve meaningful negotiation are extremely important in facing inevitable conflicts.

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■ CONSTRUCTIVE CONFLICT IN DISCUSSIONS: LEARNING TO MANAGE DISAGREEMENTS EFFECTIVELY

Julia T. Wood

Many cases of ineffective decision making on a national level can be cited: the lack of preparation for the attack of Pearl Harbor; the stalemate in the Korean War; the Bay of Pigs invasion; the repeated and unsuccessful escalations in the Vietnam War; the decision to cover up the Watergate break-in. The faulty decisions reached in these instances were a result of an inadequate process of discussion that did not allow members to voice disagreements and to engage in significant conflict of ideas. If conflict is stifled in groups of national policy makers, it is even more likely to be so in lower-level decision-making groups.

To understand why conflict is so often suppressed in problem-solving groups, it is necessary to consider our conceptions of conflict. Webster (1967) defines conflict as “disagreement...war, battle, collision, emotional tension...the opposition of persons....” Some typical student definitions of conflict concur: “Conflict happens when members of a group are too closed minded to compromise.” “It occurs when someone wants his own way in the group.” “Hostility among members.” “When there is conflict in a group, somebody loses and somebody else wins.” These definitions suggest that conflict is regarded as somewhat negative in nature and, perhaps, as something to be avoided. It is unfortunate that such negative connotations have become associated with conflict because, when it is well managed, conflict is highly constructive; in fact, it is essential to effective problem-solving discussions.

There are, of course, both constructive and disruptive methods of dealing with conflict. Its value in a problem-solving discussion is realized or defeated by the participants’ skills in managing it. Learning how to disagree productively is a primary consideration for the training of effective discussants.

CONFLICT AS A POSITIVE FORCE

Reaching consensus on a solution to a shared problem is a major goal of problem-solving discussions. Before a group can achieve consensus, however, the views of different members must be heard, given fair consideration, and critically evaluated. Conflict or disagreement is a natural and essential part of this process. The very idea of

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discussion, in fact, presupposes the existence of differing viewpoints regarding the “best” method of resolving a common problem or concern.

Although many textbooks have drawn a distinction between argumentation (which is claimed to be appropriate for public speaking) and cooperative, reflective talk (which is associated with problem-solving discussions) (Brilhart, 1967; Wagner & Arnold, 1965), such a separation is misleading. Argumentation in discussion is important, indeed essential. Sound decisions, the goal of problem-solving discussions, depend on an atmosphere that is conducive to the expression of differing opinions, to the rigorous scrutiny of evidence and implications, and to the thorough consideration of all possible alternative courses of action. A group should encourage these activities, which include disagreements, in order to increase its chances of making sound and well-considered decisions. If a group discourages these activities and muffles disagreements, it is more likely to make superficial or unwise decisions.

Most decisions must be made under uncertain conditions. Relevant information may be unavailable and knowledge about future consequences or implications of the problem and its possible solutions may be, at best, speculative. However, it is possible to increase the probability of making sound choices by realizing that good decisions must grow out of the clash and conflict of divergent ideas and out of the serious consideration of differing alternatives.

The traditional dictum for reflective cooperative talk is, of course, useful, but to rule out the argumentative aspects of discussion is to deny the intensity of deliberation that is necessary for sound decision making.

OUTGROWTHS OF CONFLICT

There appear to be at least three noteworthy reasons for encouraging conflict in problem-solving discussions:

1. By entertaining diverse ideas and perspectives, it is possible to gain a broadened understanding of the nature of the problem and its implications.
2. By encouraging the expression of different ideas, a group has potentially more alternatives from which to select a final solution.
3. The excitement that comes from conflicting ideas stimulates healthy interaction and involvement with the group’s task.

The first two reasons affect the group product—decisions; the third reason affects the group process.

A Broadened Understanding

In problem-solving discussions the first objective is to agree on the problem, or concern that prompted the meeting of the group. Although many people assume that this is a simple matter, it is a significant phase in the process of decision making. Superficial attention to this first phase often leads to backtracking later or to conclusions that are

based on an inaccurate assessment of the problem and that do not address the real problem.

Thus, in the process of determining the problem, conflict should be urged. It allows for differing perceptions and opinions and, thus, results in a broadened perspective on the problem. Walter and Scott (1973) strongly advocate disagreement during the initial stage of problem solving.

Disagreement is a prerequisite for purposive discussion, and it may often contribute important junctures during discussion from which the participants can build toward better understanding of problems Disagreements represent various interpretations to weigh and choose; potentially, therefore, they provide profitable inquiries to pursue. (p. 253)

Only when diverse ideas are encouraged can the group hope to achieve the maximally broad understanding of its problem, and this is fundamental to the remainder of the problem-solving process.

Increased Alternatives

A second reason for encouraging conflict in discussions—perhaps the most recognized and accepted rationale—is that through disagreements members can develop more possible solutions from which to make a final selection. Premature commitment to a solution without adequate awareness or consideration of alternative possibilities is all too frequent—it characterized the national fiascos mentioned earlier. A group whose norm precludes disagreement is not likely to have an array of possible solutions from which to select. In this case, the group's decision or solution is not one that grows out of serious and open-minded deliberation; rather, it is a careless gamble resulting from superficial discussion. Peter Drucker (1973), who has studied decision making in organizations, maintains that one of the most important functions of disagreement is that it alone can provide alternatives to a decision, and alternatives are necessary for anything other than rash decision making. When a group does not have alternatives, it cannot make a reasoned decision; instead, it simply ratifies the only idea that has been allowed to surface. Sound decisions grow out of the consideration—earnest, reflective consideration—of alternatives, and this may occur only when disagreement and conflict are accepted as a constructive part of the discussion process.

Member Interaction and Involvement

The final reason for advocating conflict in discussions is that it serves to stimulate members' interest in the group and the shared problem. Conflict implies vigorous interaction over ideas, and this increases participants' involvement with the task and enhances the process of decision making. A frequently cited value of discussion as a means of making decisions is that it allows for greater creativity in considering and solving problems. This value, however, rests on the assumption that various opinions and values will be invited and seriously considered by all participants so that creative combinations of ideas may occur. Healthy, noncombative disagreements provide a free

and open atmosphere for discussion, and, therefore, members' creative energies are loosed for the good of the process. Extensive observation of organizational decision-making groups has led Hoffman, Harburg, and Maier (1962) to conclude that conflict results in more creative thinking, greater member commitment to a decision, and a higher-quality decision. Creativity seems to thrive on constructive conflict.

Thus it should be clear that conflict is not to be avoided in discussions. On the contrary, it seems to be a positive force that can enhance both the process and the products of problem-solving discussion.

MANAGING CONFLICT EFFECTIVELY

Despite the fact that conflict has some significant values for discussion, everyday experience also tells us that conflict can be dangerous—it can destroy a group, lead to stalemates rather than decisions, and cause major interpersonal hostilities. Whether conflict enhances or subverts discussion depends on how the conflict is managed. There are both ineffective and effective methods of dealing with it.

Disruptive Conflict

Distributive or disruptive conflict occurs when participants do not understand the value of conflict and do not have or do not use constructive means of channeling it into deliberations. In a distributive situation there is a competitive climate; members perceive the disagreement as a game in which someone will win and others must lose. There is no integration toward a common goal, no sense of team spirit in which all ideas belong to all participants. "Getting my own way" is more important than finding the best understanding of and solution for the group's common problem. In distributive situations members tend to employ such defense mechanisms as aggression, withdrawal, repression, or projection of blame onto others. Members also tend to become locked into their own viewpoints and are unwilling even to consider the possible value of others' ideas. Frequently, in distributive situations, members will resort to personal attacks instead of focusing their disagreement on the issues.

In this type of situation there are naturally some undesirable effects. The group may form cliques or subgroups within itself. Members will be less likely to understand (or even to try to understand) one another's motives and opinions because hostility and distrust are high. When disruptive conflict penetrates discussion it may be impossible to reach any decision because the group becomes deadlocked and no member is willing to shift his or her position. Even if the group does manage to reach a decision, the group members will seldom be satisfied with it. Distributive conflict, then, is negative in its nature and its effects: it is the kind of conflict that should be avoided since it leads to nothing constructive in the process or products of discussion.

Constructive Conflict

By contrast, integrative or constructive conflict develops when members understand the utility of disagreement and when they have acquired methods of managing conflict effectively. In integrative situations there is high team spirit and commitment to group goals. Members assume that their disagreements stem from sincere involvement with the common problem and that by discussing the differing ideas they will eventually come to an agreement that is better than any one individual's initial suggestions. In integrative situations members are cooperative toward one another. They tend to be supportive of others' ideas and open to considering the merits of opinions different from their own. Disagreements are confined to the issues and do not involve personalities.

The effects of integrative conflict are desirable. Group cohesion is usually increased because members have survived some "rough waters" and have emerged with a sound solution; they also have learned that they can trust one another to be fair and open-minded. Through integrative conflict, members usually are able to reach decisions that they are proud of—the cumulative result is a process and a product that satisfies the whole group. Integrative conflict, then, is highly positive in nature because it improves not only the decisions of a group but also the process by which those decisions are made.

SUMMARY

Conflict is a necessary and integral part of realistic and effective problem-solving discussion. It is the essence of sound decision making because disagreement is the best vehicle for broadening perspectives, discovering alternatives, and stimulating creative interaction among members. The effects of disagreement, however, depend on how it is managed by participants. Conflict can be distributive and disruptive or it can be integrative and constructive. When mismanaged, conflict can destroy a group's effectiveness; when handled well, it can greatly increase the quality of a group's work and make members feel proud of their work in the group.

Training in the nature of conflict and the methods of managing it is a pressing need for all people who participate in problem-solving groups. We need to dispel the negative associations of conflict and replace them with more realistic conceptions that make the legitimate distinction between constructive and disruptive conflict. When participants see that conflict can be a positive force in discussion, they are better prepared to adopt effective personal attitudes and behaviors in problem-solving situations. Further, the differences between distributive and integrative conflict can help them learn how their own behavior contributes to the climate of the group to which they belong.

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■ HANDLING GROUP AND ORGANIZATIONAL CONFLICT

Donald T. Simpson

In any group, conflict is inevitable because different people have different viewpoints. In a work group or organization, particularly, group members see the needs of the organization differently because of their different job orientations.

A sales representative and a manufacturing manager, for example, have different jobs: the sales rep wants to promise speedy delivery (a key point in making a sale), which means large inventories in many field locations. The manufacturing manager, on the other hand, wants to keep inventories low since they tie up materials, storage space, and production schedules. A natural conflict exists between the marketing and manufacturing divisions, and management must find a way to handle these differences productively.

Some members of a church congregation may want the church to concentrate on aiding the poor, while other members think the church should focus on the spiritual needs of the congregation. The minister is caught in the middle of these factions and must resolve the conflict.

Even in marriage—the “group” that, logically, should be most intimately concerned with mutual help and love for its members—there are disagreements and differences. Few married people will testify that their marriage is free from conflict.

HEALTHY CONFLICT

Since much conflict is natural, the goal of a group is not to eliminate conflict, but to view it as essentially healthy. It can be healthy if it is handled and resolved constructively. The group or organization is enhanced by exploring differences; new ideas and new learnings result. Usually when conflict arises and is dealt with openly, people are stimulated to creativity, alternatives are considered, better ideas come forth, and a better course of action results.

WAYS OF DEALING WITH ORGANIZATIONAL CONFLICT

There are five common ways of dealing with organizational conflict. Any one method of dealing with conflict will not apply to all situations or all personalities. The leader in a group must consider when to employ what style and with whom. If a leader has used one

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method successfully, he may use it to excess. Learning about the alternative means of handling conflict gives us a wider choice of actions to employ in any given situation and makes us better able to tailor the response to the situation.

Denial or Withdrawal

With this approach, a person attempts to “get rid of” conflict by denying that it exists. He simply refuses to acknowledge it. Usually, however, the conflict does not “go away”; it grows to the point where it becomes all but unmanageable. When the issue or the timing is not critical, denial may be the most productive way of dealing with conflict.

Suppression or Smoothing Over

“We run a happy ship here.” “Nice people don’t fight.” A person using suppression plays down differences and does not recognize the positive aspects of handling the conflict openly. Again, the source of the conflict rarely goes away. Suppression may, however, be employed when it is more important to preserve a relationship than to deal with an insignificant issue through conflict.

Power or Dominance

Power is often used to settle differences. The source of the power may be vested in one’s authority or position (including referral to “the system,” higher supervision, and so on). Power may take the form of a majority (as in voting) or a persuasive minority. Power strategies, however, result in winners and losers, and the losers do not support a final decision in the same way that winners do. Future meetings of a group may be marred by the conscious or unconscious renewal of the struggle previously “settled” by the use of power. In some instances, especially where other forms of handling conflict are clearly inappropriate, power is effective. Voting is used in national elections, for example, and “the law” applies equally to all.

Compromise or Negotiation

Although often regarded as a virtue in our culture, compromise (“You give a little, I’ll give a little, and we’ll meet each other halfway”) has some serious drawbacks. Bargaining often causes both sides to assume an inflated position, since they are aware that they are going to have to “give a little” and want to buffer the loss. The compromise solution may be watered down or weakened to the point where it will not be effective. There is often little real commitment by any of the parties. Yet there are times when compromise makes sense, such as when resources are limited or it is necessary to forestall a win-lose situation.

Integration or Collaboration

This approach requires that all parties to the conflict recognize the abilities and expertise of the others. Each individual's position is well prepared, but the emphasis of the group is on trying to solve the problem at hand, rather than on defending particular positions or factions. Everyone fully expects to modify his or her original views as the group's work progresses. Ultimately, the best of the group's thinking will emerge. The assumption is that the whole of the group effort exceeds the sum of the individual members' contributions. If this approach is allowed to become an either/or settlement, or if the conflict is resolved—due to lack of time, money, or understanding—by a form of power, the final decision will suffer accordingly.

CONCLUSION

Knowing some of the different methods of dealing with conflict is extremely useful to anyone working with groups or organizations. If a group leader is aware of these methods and their advantages and disadvantages, he or she will be more effective in handling conflict.

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¹ See also the earlier works of Mary Parker Follett, who laid down a most important foundation upon which others have built.

■ DEALING WITH DISRUPTIVE PEOPLE IN MEETINGS

John E. Jones

People who conduct meetings often are troubled by the behavior of a person in attendance who is disrupting the proceedings. It is important for leaders to have a repertoire of responses in such situations in order to maintain control and to accomplish the objectives of the meeting. This article enumerates several methods that can be used to prevent, and to respond effectively to, attempts by individual people to dominate meetings at the expense of the leader. The basic theme in this approach is that the leader should take initiatives to minimize disruptions and to maintain control over meetings when dominating behavior occurs.

People can initiate many forms of disruptive behavior in meetings. Some of the more common ones are the following:

- Interrupting, cutting people off while they are talking;
- Making speeches, especially repetitious discourse;
- Sidetracking, jumping to different topics, changing issues, multiplying concerns;
- Polarizing, pushing people to take sides, attempting to win people over to one point of view;
- Emotionalizing issues, expressing fear or anxiety about probable outcomes;
- Challenging the leader and others with regard to data sources, rights, legalities;
- Expressing sarcasm, claiming that a particular idea will wreak havoc or will never win approval;
- Complaining about the system, meeting, leader, agenda;
- Threatening to withhold support, to resign, to deny responsibility, to seek retribution;
- Accusing the leader of being political, impugning motives;
- Pouting, withdrawing from active participation or controversial topics;
- Saying “Yes, but . . .” a lot, discounting the contributions of others;
- Dampening people’s enthusiasm by pointing out all possible failures; and

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- Personalizing issues and agenda topics, taking all remarks as directed toward people rather than ideas.

Many of these disruptive behaviors constitute attempts to take over or subvert the leadership of the meeting. Whenever possible the leader needs to anticipate these dominating postures and prevent their occurrence. In addition, the leader needs to be able to respond to disruptions when they occur within a meeting, whether they were anticipated or not; and there are some situations in which the leader needs to resort to drastic methods.

It is assumed in this treatment that the leader establishes the agenda, designs the meeting, and facilitates the meeting process. All of these prerogatives are sources of authority and power for the leader, and it is critical for the leader to have a broad power base from which to deal with disruptive behavior. Of course, that includes maintaining high rapport with the majority of those in attendance at the meeting. It is a good rule not to have meetings for which specific goals cannot be articulated and to avoid having meetings that are highly likely to produce negative results. The leader, then, has objectives and needs strategies, tactics, and techniques to ensure that those objectives are not jeopardized by the disruptive behavior of a dominating person.

PREVENTING DISRUPTIONS

A number of political moves can be made prior to the meeting to attempt to preclude a person's domination of the event. These tactics are meant to keep intact the leader's ability to conduct a productive interchange among members. They are "power plays" in the sense that they are designed to erode the other person's base of support and courage and make it possible to carry out leadership functions. These methods are not necessarily nice, but neither is the disruption of an honest meeting. Eight tactics can be considered by the leader in advance of the meeting:

1. Get the dominator's cooperation for this one meeting. Ask the person to agree not to argue from a fixed (and often familiar) position.
2. Give the person a special task or role in the meeting, such as posting the viewpoints of others.
3. Work out your differences before the meeting (possibly with a third-party facilitator) to present a united front to all other members.
4. Structure the meeting to include frequent discussion of the process of the meeting itself.
5. Take all of the dominator's items off the agenda.
6. Set the person up to be concerned about what might be the consequences of disruption. For example, "It has come to my attention that a number of people are angry with you, and I am thinking about opening up their discussion in the meeting."

7. Ask other people to attend the meeting to support you in dealing with the disruptive person's behavior. For example, they can be asked to refuse to argue with the person, give feeling reactions to the dominating behavior, and confront the dysfunctional behavior directly.
8. Make the person's behavior a published agendum.

Obviously, these methods are manipulative in that they involve deliberate attempts to influence the behavior of another person or persons. People who attempt to dominate meetings have energy that can sometimes be channeled productively, and the best outcome of these preventive postures would be that the person who is often disruptive becomes an effective meeting participant. If these methods are not feasible, the leader needs to have options for keeping control during the meeting itself.

DURING THE MEETING

The leader has two major methods for dealing with disruptive individuals during the course of the meeting: (1) to confront the person directly and attempt to change his or her behavior and (2) to use the group of people present to work with the domination. The important consideration is that the leader must maintain control over what is done and must initiate change. Nine tactics can be used in a direct exchange with the disruptive individual:

1. Interview the person, modeling effective listening. The leader may learn something that is significant to the goals of the meeting by developing the dominating person's perspective, and that person may learn how to contribute to the exchange in a productive manner.
2. Turn all of the dominator's questions into statements. This tactic forces the person to take responsibility for expressing a point of view rather than blocking the process through questions.
3. Point out the win-lose character of debates and refuse to argue.
4. Suggest a role reversal. The person can chair the meeting while you attempt to dominate. The person may also be invited to argue the other side of the issue for a time or may be asked to be silent for ten minutes and report the gist of the interchange.
5. Reflect the dominator's feelings and ignore the person's content input. "You seem particularly upset today, especially when I disagree with you. How are you feeling about my interaction with you right now?"
6. Give emotional responses to the dominator. "I feel powerless to accomplish anything here with you, and I get angry when you try to take over by attempting to force your procedural suggestions on the group."
7. Reduce the person's position to absurdity by interviewing the dominator to the logical extremes of the argument.

8. Agree with all of the person's presentation that is not directly germane to the issue. Agree with the person's need to be heard and supported.
9. Draw out the motives of the dominator and respond to these aims rather than to the content of the presentation.

The leader must be careful to remember that the "audience" for such exchanges can be made anxious by these techniques. The leader can inadvertently put the dominator in an "underdog" position, gaining sympathy from other meeting participants. There is a good chance that others in the meeting are just as annoyed as the leader is about the disruptive behavior, and there are ways to use that situation to maintain control. Five interventions can be considered to that end:

1. Have the meeting participants establish ground rules to avoid polarization. For example, the word "issue" can be made illegal; people have to couch their discussions in terms of problem solving rather than right-wrong, either-or dichotomies.
2. Post all points raised on a given topic, without names. This makes the information available to all and can lessen repetition.
3. Post all contributions made by the dominator and set the expectation that everyone has a responsibility to avoid maneuvering to achieve a personal goal.
4. Create small audiences. Give the dominator only one or two people to influence. Instruct subgroups to generate statements by consensus. Pair people with differing points of view, instruct them to interview each other, and have people report to the entire meeting.
5. Structure an agreement between the dominator and a major opponent. Pick the person whose position is most dissimilar to the dominator's (or ask the dominator to do this). Have this pair discuss the topic for three to five minutes and come to an agreement about one piece of the problem. Other participants sit in a circle around the pair, observe their process, and give them feedback afterward.

Leaders can use the "audience" to control disruptive behavior by encouraging others to be open about their responses to the domination. Sometimes, however, these strategies do not succeed completely, and the leader needs more drastic approaches to consider.

WHEN ALL ELSE FAILS

When the leader feels that the meeting's purposes are being successfully thwarted by the dominator, he or she must be able to intervene in such a way as to protect the objectives. Three options are available:

1. Create a chaotic condition in the meeting, exaggerating if necessary, and show the group a way out. This often-used political ploy capitalizes on people's need

for closure and order, and the dominator's position can often be lost in the process.

2. Adjourn the meeting when the dominator takes over.
3. Leave the meeting when the dominator takes over, disavowing responsibility for what is done.

These three methods are, of course, bold; they should not be chosen unless the situation is clearly dangerous for the leader. The final one, sometimes called the "Gromyko Intervention," because of that leader's penchant for walking out of United Nations sessions, requires follow-through in order to maintain the leader's power.

Caveats

All of these methods require that the leader adopt a cool, unruffled posture. Becoming angry means giving away power, and the leader of a meeting needs to focus detached attention on managing the situation in the light of the purposes established for the event. Using many of these techniques in rapid succession can result in "overkill," and the leader needs to make certain that the motive is not to punish a person but to promote functional behavior.

Leaders who use these tactics as a matter of routine style even when they are inappropriate become sources of disruption themselves in that they prevent meeting participants from having the opportunity to influence the discussion. Too-frequent use of these methods can intimidate meeting participants who are less bold than dominators, and the result can be that they contribute less to the meeting out of fear of being confronted.

Disruptive behavior in meetings is almost always a symptom of some defect in the organizational system that the meeting is designed to support. Leaders need to consider that every meeting is, in reality, an organization development session and should be facilitated in ways that isolate problems for remedial action.

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■ COPING WITH CONFLICT

Martin B. Ross

Conflict between and among individuals, groups, organizations, and nations pervades U.S. society. Definitions of conflict cover a wide range and usually include such dimensions as conditions, perceptions, emotions, behavior, and outcome. Conflict is defined here as a process that begins when one of the parties to the interaction perceives that another has frustrated, or is about to frustrate, one of his or her needs or concerns (Thomas, 1976, p. 891). By viewing conflict in this way—considering the diversity of people’s values, attitudes, beliefs, motives, and goals—it is no wonder that conflict is so pervasive. Given the potential for real or perceived frustration of some need or concern, opportunities for conflict are abundant and conflict is inevitable.

CONFLICT-MANAGEMENT STYLES

The ability to cope successfully with conflict is among the most important social skills one can acquire. As people mature they usually develop behaviors for coping with conflict; there is even some evidence that they develop certain preferred styles (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974). Almost invariably conflict-management skills are acquired without formal education or guidance. Usually behaviors are modeled after the behavior of others. If one is fortunate enough to have good models, and if one is lucky enough to be in situations in which the modeled style is effective, one is usually successful. If not, one may learn an effective style too late. The best way to minimize failure is to learn what styles are available, in what situations they are most effectively employed, and how to use them.

A model developed by Thomas (1976) provides an excellent framework for learning various conflict-management behaviors, their situation-specific assets and liabilities, and the consequences of using a particular style too much or too little. As shown in Figure 1, the model describes the behaviors of each party in a conflict situation along two behavioral dimensions: (1) *assertiveness*, the extent to which the individual attempts to satisfy his or her own concerns, and (2) *cooperativeness*, the extent to which the individual attempts to satisfy the other person’s concerns. These two dimensions define five distinct styles for coping with *conflict*: *competition*, *collaboration*, *avoidance*, *accommodation*, and *compromise*. Much of the following discussion is based on Thomas and Kilmann (1974).

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Competition

Competition reflects a desire to meet one's own needs and concerns at the expense of the other party. As the model illustrates, the most assertive and least cooperative people use the competitive style. To achieve the desired outcome, the competitor uses whatever power is available and acceptable, for example, position or rank, information, expertise, persuasive ability, economic sanction, or coercion. If the stakes are high enough, a very competitive person's use of power may well be limited only by some greater external power such as the law or social taboos.

Some advocate the use of the competitive style in all actual or potential conflict situations, which is not surprising given the endless models and reward systems that foster and support competition in our society. Others condemn the competitive style as a win/lose strategy. Competing (or any other style) is neither good nor bad, but one of many styles that may be appropriate and effective, depending on the situation.

Life-threatening situations requiring quick, decisive action may require a power-oriented competitive style. Generals in battle or parents in certain circumstances might choose to control soldiers or children without considering their needs and concerns. A competitive style may also be necessary at times to protect oneself from others who tend to take advantage of noncompetitive behavior.

Collaboration

Collaboration involves the maximum use of both cooperation and assertion. Those using a collaborative style aim to satisfy the needs and concerns of both parties. Collaborating means (1) acknowledging that there is a conflict; (2) identifying and acknowledging each other's needs, concerns, and goals; (3) identifying alternative resolutions and their consequences for each person; (4) selecting the alternative that meets the needs and concerns and accomplishes the goals of each party; and (5) implementing the alternative selected and evaluating the results.

Collaborating requires more commitment than the other styles and takes more time and energy. It follows that such commitment must be warranted by situations in which the needs and concerns of the parties are extremely important and cannot be ignored. Collaboration is also the best style to use when it is essential that the parties to a conflict be committed to the resolution, because an outcome that meets the needs of both parties is more likely to have the required support and commitment. Going through the collaboration process can also lead to personal growth as the parties involved explore and test their values, assumptions, and potential solutions.

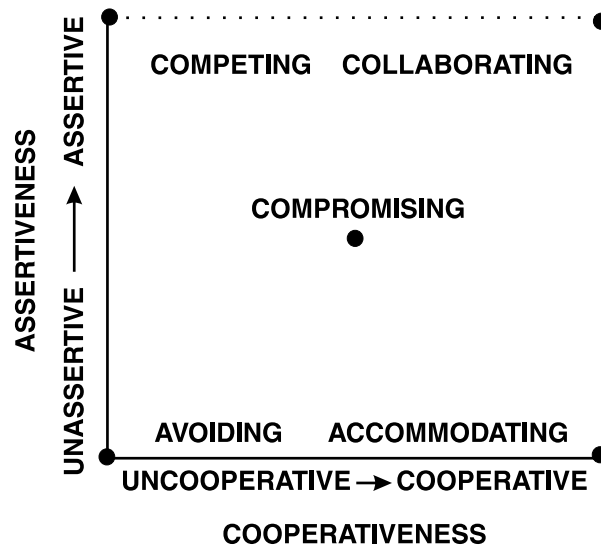


Figure 1. Major Styles of Coping with Conflict¹

Avoidance

Avoidance is characterized by both uncooperative and unassertive behavior by both parties. Those employing this style simply do not address the conflict and are indifferent to each other's needs and concerns. They evade the issue, withdraw from the discussion, or may not even stay for the resolution.

Avoidance can be employed effectively as either an interim or a permanent strategy. For example, if discussion is heated, it may be useful to allow the other person to cool down. At times, avoiding a situation until more information is available or an analysis of the problem has been made is the most productive approach. Temporarily avoiding a situation is also helpful if the issue is relatively unimportant, if there is not enough time available to come to a resolution, or if the issue is thought to be only a symptom of a more extensive problem that must be dealt with later.

As a permanent strategy, avoidance of the situation is indicated if the probability of satisfying one's own needs and concerns is exceedingly low and there is no concern for the other party's needs and concerns. Total avoidance is also called for if others can resolve the conflict more easily.

Accommodation

Accommodation is characterized by cooperative and unassertive behavior. Accommodation means placing the other party's needs and concerns above one's own, even if one has very strong needs and concerns in the situation (which produces the conflict).

¹ Adapted from the model of conflict presented by Kenneth Thomas in M.D. Dunnette (Ed.), *Handbook of Industrial and Organizational Psychology*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1976. Used with permission of current copyright owner, Marvin D. Dunnette.

Accommodation is appropriate and effective if one party is not as concerned as the other. Accommodating the needs of the first party builds good will and leads to cooperative relationships. Accommodation is also effective when preserving harmony and avoiding disruption are especially important or when one person has a great deal more power than the other.

Compromise

Compromise is midway between competition and collaboration and avoidance and accommodation. Moderate amounts of cooperativeness and assertiveness are required to effect a compromise. The person compromising expects that the outcome will be partial fulfillment of the needs, concerns, and goals of both people. Both search for a mutually acceptable, partially satisfying solution. Compromise results in more aggregate needs being met than would be met through competition and fewer met than would be met by collaboration. Through compromise more issues are confronted than would be confronted through avoidance, but issues are confronted less thoroughly than they would be through collaboration. Although the solution to a compromise is mutually acceptable, it only partially satisfies each person's needs and wants. Therefore, competition is second to collaboration in degree of satisfaction produced.

Compromise is appropriate and effective when temporary solutions are sought for complex issues or when time is short. Compromise is also appropriate when the goals of the parties are moderately important but not worth the effort and time required for collaboration. Compromise is preferred when the parties are strongly committed to mutually exclusive goals and it is unlikely that either party has the power to dominate the other. Compromise also may be considered an effective strategy in case an effort to collaborate fails.

WHICH STYLE TO USE

Whether a particular conflict-management style is appropriate is specific to the situation. To be effective at managing conflict, one should be able to use any of the styles and know when each style is appropriate. However, people tend to develop one preferred style and use it in most situations. As a consequence, people may neglect styles that could be more effective. Brief descriptions of the potential adverse consequences or over- or under-use of the styles of coping with conflict discussed earlier follow.

Competition

Someone who uses a competitive style to the exclusion of the other styles, may find that other people object to being forced into win/lose situations. Competitors do not yield their positions and often express anger and frustration openly and aggressively toward those who disagree. Other people learn that confronting a competitor brings negative consequences, so consistent competitors may not receive important information and

feedback from others. Consistent competitors may be seen as belligerent and they may ultimately be cut off from interaction with others.

People who never use the competitive style may also suffer adverse consequences. They may feel powerless against competitors especially. In addition, the individual may be ineffective from lack of practice if he or she elects to use the style.

Collaboration

Collaboration requires a substantially greater commitment than do the other conflict-management styles. Many issues simply do not warrant the time and energy required to seek optimal solutions, and not all conflicts are worth resolving or even lend themselves to resolution. Collaboration is being overemployed if seeking resolution to conflict is tapping energy needed for other activities.

One-sided commitment to collaboration can also result in advantage being taken of the person who attempts to reach a mutually satisfying resolution. Because collaboration requires openness and trust, if only one of the parties to the conflict is willing to be open and trusting, that party will be at a disadvantage.

Creative ideas and solutions to complex problems are more likely to emerge through collaboration. A person who never uses the collaborative style risks loss of truly innovative ideas and resolutions to the conflict.

Avoidance

Many people assume that there are no adverse consequences associated with avoiding conflict. They assume that if they withdraw they have no responsibility and therefore there can be no negative consequences. On the contrary, too much avoidance of conflict can create problems for both parties. Participation in decision making fosters commitment to and subsequent implementation of the decision. If one person withdraws, decisions will be made and goals will be set with or without that person's input, resulting in poor implementation of the decision and low levels of commitment to it.

The person who rarely avoids conflict may also encounter adverse consequences. Selectively avoiding conflict can be a good tactic to employ. Those who confront every conflict head on can hurt others' feelings and stir up their hostilities. Selective avoidance is also the best way to keep from becoming overwhelmed by conflict, a distinct possibility in U.S. society. The importance of every potential conflict needs to be weighed and a determination must be made about whether to avoid the situation.

Accommodation

Those who use accommodation to excess may feel that their own ideas, needs, and concerns are not receiving the attention they deserve. Accommodators generally are "quiet" and are perceived that way to the extent that they are often not heard when they do make a contribution. Their influence, respect, and recognition may erode.

On the other hand, those who rarely use accommodation may be seen as unreasonable, and they may fail to maintain good relations with others because they do not acquire the good will that accommodation can bring.

Compromise

Those who always compromise risk losing sight of what it would be like to have all their needs met. People become caught up in the tactics and strategies of compromise and lose sight of important values and principles and the myriad possibilities.

On the other hand, people who never compromise may never develop the skills needed to bargain or negotiate when necessary. They may be unable to make concessions and may not be able to extricate themselves from potentially no-win confrontations.

SUMMARY

Nothing is inherently right or wrong about any of the conflict-management styles; each may be more or less appropriate and effective, depending on the situation and the parties involved.

Each of us has access to a variety of conflict-management behaviors but we tend to prefer certain ones and to use them to the exclusion of other styles that could be more effective in a given situation—with adverse consequences. We must develop the skills to execute any of the styles. Then we can diagnose conflict situations and choose the appropriate way to deal with whatever comes up, depending on our needs at the time and the importance of coming to a resolution within a prescribed time frame.

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■ THE ART OF CREATIVE FIGHTING

H.B. Karp

Whether the particular setting is the family, the small group, the agency, or the business unit, training individuals to deal effectively with conflict requires a great deal of skill and awareness on the part of the facilitator. When training is unsuccessful in other areas of human resource development, such as communication, problem solving, or motivation, the worst that usually happens is that the situation does not improve with time; in other words, communication remains ineffective, problems are not solved, or productivity fails to increase. In dealing with conflict, however, the situation is quite different. A training error or an inappropriate intervention can make the situation immediately more risky and volatile than it was previously. It also becomes less likely that a positive outcome will emerge.

Several elements contribute to making conflict training such a touchy area:

- The topic itself has a strong tendency to initiate deep feelings on the part of most participants and some facilitators. Most people either do not like conflict or are afraid of it even before they deal with it.
- Training in conflict management is not just a matter of cognitive understanding of relevant theory and technique. Facilitators must be comfortable with conflict and their own unique approaches to dealing with it *before* they can assist others in this regard.
- Despite disclaimers to the contrary, there appears to be a highly preferred, “one-best way” to deal with conflict from the viewpoint of human resource development: collaboration. Facilitators work effectively with people in developing collaborative approaches to conflict issues, but they often ignore or avoid other approaches in the process. This tendency has the effect of limiting alternatives and can lead to an impasse. In fact, such a unidirectional approach may increase rather than lessen the fear of conflict. Although collaboration may be the most preferable method for dealing with conflict, on some occasions a collaborative solution simply is not available.

A pragmatic view of training in the area of conflict indicates that the first essential step is to help people to see the simplest and most basic aspects of conflict, thereby stripping it of its mystic and awesome nature. Conflict certainly demands respect, but it need not generate fear and wonder. The second essential step is to legitimize the process

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of conflict. The most valuable skill needed in handling a conflict is not the ability to get along well; it is the ability to fight well. The time to get along well is after the fight is over. Indeed, when people are able to fight fully and creatively, it is probable that they will get along better after the resolution than they did before the conflict arose.

THE NATURE OF CONFLICT

Conflict occurs when two or more people attempt to occupy the same space at the same time. This space can be physical, psychological, intimate, political, or any arena in which there is room for only one view, outcome, or individual. Whether cast in the home or the work setting, conflict is absolutely unavoidable as a normal condition of active life. In addition, it is neither good nor bad in itself; it simply is. Whether the outcome of a conflict situation is positive or negative is almost totally determined by the way in which it is managed. When managed effectively, conflict actually becomes a vital asset in that it is a prime source of energy and creativity in a system.

The four major categories of areas in which conflict arises are described as follows, in descending order of the objectivity involved.

1. *Fact.* Conflict over fact is the most frequent variety, the most objective in nature, the least volatile, and by far the easiest to resolve. This type of conflict centers on *what a thing is or is not*. Resolution is usually achieved by comparing the object of the conflict to a standard or by referring to a mutually acceptable authority. For example, if one person believes that a specific object is a hammer and another believes it to be an axe, resolution is simple to achieve: Obtain a picture of each and hold them next to the object in question.

2. *Method.* Conflict over method is a little more subjective and volatile than conflict over fact. Those involved disagree about a procedure and are in conflict over *what is to be done*. Although personal opinion enters into the process, the conflict can be managed objectively for the most part. For example, a conflict about how to conduct a sales campaign can be resolved most easily by achieving mutual agreement on market conditions, advertising capabilities, budget constraints, and so forth.

3. *Objectives.* Conflict over objectives is more subjective and has a greater potential for volatility than the two types previously discussed. It concerns *what is to be accomplished* and is harder fought due to the fact that it incorporates higher degrees of personal commitment and risk, in terms of both personal and organizational variables. For example, “what is best for the company,” such as the next project, is often intertwined with “what is best for me,” such as the next promotion. Critical to managing this type of conflict is the recognition that the subjective elements involved are as legitimate as the objective elements.

4. *Values.* Conflict over values is almost totally subjective in nature and is, therefore, the most volatile type. It pertains to *what is right or wrong*. Mismanaged conflicts over values can result in divorces and even wars. The basic strategy in dealing

with such a conflict is to avoid it if at all possible. If it is unavoidable, the best tactic is to objectify the issue as much as possible, dealing with behaviors or events that arise from the value rather than dealing with the value itself. For example, a heated argument over the morality of capital punishment has a high probability of ending in nothing but rage, self-righteousness, and moral indignation. However, a discussion of capital punishment in terms of its deterrent effects and legal ramifications has a somewhat better chance of resulting in agreement and resolution.

STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING CONFLICT

The three basic strategies that are used to manage conflict are described in the following paragraphs. These strategies concern the way in which the conflict is resolved rather than the way in which it is conducted.

1. *Competition* is known as the “win/lose” approach to conflict; people compete to see who wins, and the winner takes all. The most obvious example of the competitive approach to conflict is an athletic event.

2. *Compromise* is a “lose/lose” approach. All parties agree to sacrifice equal portions of what they want. Subsequently, another mutual cut may be established and another until everyone settles for very little of what he or she originally wanted. An illustration of the result of conflict that is dealt with through compromise is the comparison between the wording of a bill in the House of Representatives prior to its first committee hearing and the final wording when that bill is enacted into law.

3. *Collaboration* is called the “win/win” approach. When this strategy is employed, people agree ahead of time to work with their conflict until they come up with a unique solution that provides each of them with all or almost all of what he or she wants.

There is little question that the collaborative approach to conflict, although it is the most costly in terms of time and energy, has the highest probability of producing the most creative and highest yielding results. However, as mentioned previously, there are times when a collaborative approach is not available and the issues are too important and vital to the individuals involved even to consider compromise. Some conditions that tend to preclude collaboration are harsh time deadlines, poor interpersonal relationships between or among the conflicting parties, severely limited resources, or differing values. Under these circumstances, competition is the only means available for managing the conflict.

Frequently a conflict is first approached competitively due to lack of interest in or unawareness of a collaborative alternative; then, after those involved have competed for a while, they discover a collaborative solution. If the fighting is creative and effective, there is a higher probability that this will occur, given the potential availability of a collaborative solution at the outset.

CREATIVE FIGHTING

It is often the case that people in conflict are unwilling to engage one another powerfully simply because they do not possess the basic skills required for effective fighting. Paradoxically, once an individual has acquired these skills and is comfortable with them, it is much less likely that he or she will have to use them. The newly acquired knowledge and abilities produce a clear confidence that is observable to others, thereby making the individual less subject to unilateral attacks. On the other hand, if a fight becomes unavoidable, he or she can handle it.

Anger is as appropriate and productive a reaction to events as is any other human response. It is as unavoidably reflexive a response to being frustrated as laughter is to being amused. The issue involved is not whether it is appropriate to feel anger when frustrated, but rather how to deal with anger appropriately when it occurs. People must be made aware that there are techniques of fighting that can be learned and used skillfully. Also, they must be given the opportunity to practice these techniques in a neutral, low-risk setting, such as a training workshop. When all parties involved in a fight have acknowledged the legitimacy of conflict, established the norms for fighting, and are confident in their own abilities and strength, they are likely to approach one another with respect. Under such circumstances, there is little threat to ongoing relationships; in fact, there is a great potential for solidifying and enhancing these relationships.

The following paragraphs describe ten guidelines for the process of preparing people to fight creatively.

Establish the Legitimacy of Fighting

Fighting must be seen as a natural and sometimes appropriate thing to do. Occasionally it is even fun, as long as all parties agree to do it. Above all, fighting must not be viewed as an activity to be avoided at all costs. Whenever two or more people are working or living together, conflicts of interest arise. Sometimes these conflicts can be resolved through peaceful negotiation or willing compliance; sometimes they cannot. When the latter condition exists, fighting is the ultimate and appropriate response, unless one or more of the parties disempower themselves and give in because of fear of confrontation.

As stated previously, when fighting is approached creatively, it has several positive aspects that should be recognized: It is energizing; it honors all of its participants; it frequently produces the best solution under the circumstances; it strengthens, rather than weakens, relationships; and the arena in which it occurs becomes a safer, more “human” place in which to live and work. When fighting is not engaged in creatively, personal relationships deteriorate and become characterized by spite, sniping, silent vows of vengeance, sulking, self-pity, and complaints about being misunderstood.

Deal with One Issue at a Time

In an ongoing relationship, unfinished business frequently coexists with the current source of contention. The temptation when fighting is to bring up unresolved arguments from the past and catch an opponent off guard. When this ploy is successful, the person who initiated it achieves the upper hand and places the opponent on the defensive; the parties involved start a different fight that bears no relevance to the present conflict, and both (or all) of them become vulnerable to attack in this fashion.

Therefore, it is important for those in conflict to maintain a focus on the point of contention. When one person confronts another with an unrelated issue, the individual who is attacked should not respond except to say “That’s not what we’re dealing with at the moment.” Subsequently, the parties may agree to discuss the secondary issue at some time in the future.

Occasionally, during the course of a fight, it becomes obvious that a secondary issue from the past is actually blocking the resolution of the issue at hand. For example, one person might say to another, “The last time you asked me for support and I helped you, you refused to acknowledge my contribution in the final report.” When such a situation arises, the current issue should be set aside until closure of the unfinished issue is achieved, at which point the original fight can be continued with greater energy and a higher probability of a successful outcome. The important point is that only one issue should be addressed at a time.

Choose the Arena Carefully

Just because one person is angry with another and wants to fight does not automatically mean that the second party is ready or willing to oblige. Too often, one of the parties is dragged into “the combat zone” when totally unprepared or uninterested, and this situation frequently creates further unnecessary defensiveness, resentment, and personal animosity. To prevent such a development, all parties involved must understand and agree that if one person does not want to fight at a particular moment, no fight takes place at that time. There are three basic responses to consider when a fight is impending.

1. *Engage.* If the timing is right and the point is legitimate, the sooner it is brought into the open and dealt with creatively, the better. The usual outcome of avoiding a fight is that the longer it stays internalized, the higher the probability that it will fester and become more interpersonally volatile.

2. *Accede.* If an issue is important to one party but not to another, the person who feels it to be unimportant may accede to the point. Before engaging in a fight, everyone involved should determine whether the issue is worth his or her time and effort. It makes little sense to pursue a goal that is of no personal consequence. One benefit of this response is that it transforms an opponent into an ally. Another positive aspect is that the individual who consciously chooses to accede to another’s wishes experiences no loss of power.

3. *Postpone.* If a person is prematurely engaged in a conflict, he or she may choose to acknowledge the issue and then put it aside. This approach involves listening to what the other person says, acknowledging an understanding of the point being made and its importance, and setting a time for assembling everyone involved and dealing with the issue. This response has a tendency not only to defuse the issue for the individual who brought it up, but also to prevent its escalation. In addition, postponing a fight allows time to consider the issue fully and to develop appropriate tactics.

The individual who initiates a confrontation and is met with postponement as a response must remember that an opponent should never be forced to fight before he or she is ready. Agreeing to the postponement can be advantageous in that a fully prepared opponent is less likely to overreact or to wage unwarranted counterattacks than is an opponent who is caught off guard.

Avoid Reacting to Unintentional Remarks

Frequently, in the heat of battle, things are said that are regretted an instant later. This is particularly true if the issue at hand is of deep, personal significance to one or both of the parties; if ego involvement is high; or if the relationship is an important one. A related consideration is the fact that often people do not know precisely what they feel or think until they hear themselves verbalizing these feelings or thoughts.

An important aspect of creative fighting is to establish the norm that when unexpected or unintentional comments are made, none of the parties involved will respond by escalating the fight into a more volatile stage that no one wants. Instead, the preferred tactic should be to stop the conversation when a questionable comment is made and determine whether the comment accurately conveys what the speaker meant. If the speaker disavows the comment, everyone—including the speaker—should ignore it; if he or she confirms it, a deeper point of contention may have arisen. In the latter case, those involved in the fight must then decide which issue to focus on.

Avoid Resolutions That Come Too Soon or Too Easily

Newly married couples are often told, “Never let the sun set on an argument.” However, this advice may be too simplistic. When a fight is resolved too quickly or a simple but incomplete resolution is agreed to, there are several negative side effects that are usually more painful and damaging in the long run than the original fight itself.

For example, if a fight ends prematurely, its unfinished elements do not go away; they are temporarily repressed and will almost certainly manifest themselves later. Also, the easiest solution is not always the best one in that it tends to treat symptoms and thereby obscure the real problem. Still another negative effect is that if the solution is complete for one party but not for another, the person who feels unsatisfied is not emotionally free to enter into future fights with total enthusiasm. This last effect, although very subtle, can seriously damage the relationship(s) involved.

Each fight has its own, unique level of intensity. Some fights involve simple disagreements and are resolvable “by sundown,” whereas those that involve intense

feelings, deep-seated values, or complex issues require much more time to be dealt with effectively. With each fight, it is essential that the parties recognize and remain aware of the time element.

There are ways to approach the handling of time. The first is to recognize clearly and specifically the complexity and importance of the issue and then to agree to devote as much time as required to achieve a resolution. The second approach, known as “bracketing,” is also quite useful, particularly when complex, interdependent relationships are involved and the issue at hand is complicated. Many times, reality dictates that even though a fight is taking place, everyday life must go on. When this is the case, it is appropriate to fight for the length of time available; “bracket” the fight by setting it aside completely, but on a temporary basis; devote energies to other concerns as necessary; and resume the fight when possible. In many instances, this approach allows adversaries to work together well and energetically in areas that are not affected by the fight; the harmonious functioning is possible because the point of contention, although “on hold,” is still actively being honored by the adversaries.

Avoid Name Calling

The function of creative fighting is to manage conflict in such a way that the following outcomes are ensured.

- An effective resolution is found;
- Everyone involved maintains a clear sense of personal dignity throughout; and
- The relationship(s) is (are) in no way damaged.

Nothing blocks these outcomes more effectively than resorting to name calling.

Creative fighting is unlike many other approaches to conflict in which the participants devote their efforts to injuring their opponents as much as possible; instead, when fighting creatively, each participant strives to achieve a specific objective. In most cases these individual objectives are mutually exclusive so that a clear choice must be made as to which will constitute the final outcome. When accomplishing a specific objective is a person’s reason for fighting, it is very much in that individual’s best interest not to dehumanize the opponent(s).

Name calling usually occurs when logical arguments fail or when one or more of the parties have become frustrated beyond tolerance. In order to avoid name calling, the safest and most productive stance to maintain throughout the fight is to speak strictly for oneself. When everyone invariably speaks only in terms of what he or she wants, feels, or thinks, there is little risk that anyone will be personally offended; consequently, there is little risk that the fight will escalate to a more volatile and unmanageable level.

Avoid Cornering an Opponent

Occasionally, being “right” and devastating one’s opponent may be more personally satisfying than achieving the best resolution possible. However, this approach produces

only momentary satisfaction and can be very costly. The practice of cornering and devastating an opponent may preclude a solid resolution. Also, the party who is the object of such an attack may eventually retaliate in kind.

One important aspect of conflict is that, regardless of the point of contention, the longer the fight goes on or the greater the intensity, the higher the ego involvement and the greater the need to save face. Everyone involved should keep this in mind and make it as easy as possible to accommodate one another's wishes. Above all, opponents must be allowed to save face. For example, if it is obvious to everyone that an opponent cannot win a particular argument, it is best to let that opponent retire gracefully. The adversary who allows such a retreat not only achieves what he or she wants, but also accords the opponent the respect that is deserved. Thus, this stance usually results in some degree of appreciation on the part of the vanquished opponent, particularly when all parties realize that pain and humiliation could have been inflicted had the party with the upper hand chosen to do so.

Agree To Disagree

Creative fighting demands the generation of alternatives and a conscious choice of one of these alternatives. Although a mutually acceptable resolution is always the desired outcome, sometimes the reality is that such a resolution is not available. In a fight in which the point of contention is basically impersonal, such as an argument over a fact or a method, a mutually acceptable resolution is almost always available. However, in a fight that is waged over a deeper, more personal issue, such as an objective or a value, mutuality is much more difficult and sometimes impossible to achieve. In the latter case, each viewpoint is so innately a part of the individual who holds it that any attempt to minimize its validity will be taken as an attack on the individual personally. Thus, it is almost impossible for someone involved in such a fight to concede a point without feeling personally diminished in the process.

As mentioned previously, the best and most obvious choice in dealing with arguments of a personal nature is to avoid them completely, if at all possible. Sometimes, however, a discussion about one point reveals a more intense point that is really what is at issue. As soon as it becomes evident that the parties involved are diametrically opposed on a deeply personal issue, there is little or no chance that anything can be said to alter the situation. In fact, the longer the confrontation continues, the higher the probability that each party will become more firmly entrenched in his or her position. Thus, the parties should simply agree to disagree and drop the subject for the moment. Once everyone agrees that it is perfectly acceptable to see things differently and that no attempts at conversion will be made, the subject is much safer to discuss in the future should it arise again. In the meantime, all parties can live or work together productively, because the point of difference can be side-stepped.

It is highly improbable that people involved in a long-term work or personal relationship will share all core values. Not to recognize this fact invites unnecessary squabbling. Although there seems to be constant pressure in interdependent relationships

to locate common ground, it may be just as important to isolate irreconcilable differences and acknowledge them as being equally natural and “human.”

In some rare instances in which a relationship between two people is extremely interdependent and long term, the parties may hold such polarized values that when one pursues his or her value, the pursuance automatically creates pain or severe problems for the other. Some examples of this type of polarization are the need for autonomy versus the need for participation, the need for isolation versus the need for intimacy, and concern with production versus concern for people. When the situation is so extreme that any concession on the part of either person will result in a loss of self-respect, the following procedure should be considered.

1. *Accept the polarity.* The two parties involved must establish the norm that both have a right to their viewpoints, but that neither is required to like the opposite viewpoint.

2. *Establish the importance of the relationship.* The parties should determine all of the positive, productive aspects of the relationship. It is preferable that they complete this task together rather than separately. They must review the basic values that they hold in common as well as their past successes in the relationship. During this process, enjoyable times and instances of mutual support should be recalled, and the potential for similar occurrences in the future should be accepted. In addition, the interdependent nature of the relationship should be acknowledged and defined.

It is important to note, however, that this step might reveal the possibility that the two parties do not have a solid relationship and that permanent disengagement may be the most realistic, mutually beneficial resolution.

3. *Stay with the fight to the end.* If the parties determine that the relationship is important and worth saving, they must agree to endure the fight. However, neither should acquiesce only to please the other person or to reduce the other’s pain; both should be appreciative of attempts to please, but they should not accept concessions that are made strictly for this purpose. If they have evaluated their relationship correctly, they will find ways to continue to work together productively, even though they are both experiencing some degree of pain. Both parties must remember that although they seriously disagree on a specific issue, they do not disagree on all others.

Working or living with someone under these conditions represents an incredibly heavy burden for both parties. Sooner or later, only because of exhaustion, it is probable that they will mutually agree to “let go” of the troublesome issue. More to the point, as the exhaustion increases, so does the importance of other issues, and the originally polarized viewpoints tend to become modified. When this happens, it may be possible to achieve a resolution.

Focus on What Is Wanted Rather Than Why It Is Wanted

Almost all fights, creative or otherwise, arise from the fact that the participants want different things. Also, in many cases compliance from the opponent(s) is necessary for

the attainment of each person's objective. Thus, it is essential to establish clearly what each party wants and how these objectives differ. On the other hand, spending time and energy exploring why each party wants what he or she wants is, at best, a total waste of time and, at worst, an invitation to a psychological melee.

The point to remember is that people have a right to want what they want and to want all of it. This point has tremendous impact on creative fighting. When participants answer opponents' inquiries as to why they want specific objectives, they become "defendants" and the opponents become "judges" who can rule on the worthiness of the reasons supplied. These reasons, once verbalized, are usually anything but convincing. The reality is that very few people know exactly why they want what they want. In fact, most are not very concerned with their own motivation in this regard; for them, it is simply enough that they want.

In addition, the answer to the first "why?" usually leads to another "why?" and still another, and each time the defendant is forced to stray farther from the original objective in order to provide an answer. Eventually, the issue that generated the fight becomes obscured. The roles may even be reversed; the defendant may become the judge and counter with questions of his or her own. Thus, all parties are compelled to defend themselves, and as a result the fight may escalate.

Therefore, the best strategy is to avoid asking and answering queries about motivation. Instead, each person should concentrate on accomplishing his or her specific goal.

Maintain a Sense of Humor

Fighting is most often viewed as a grim and serious business. In many cases, of course, it is quite serious and certainly deserves to be respected. However, even when the subject of the fight is important and tempers are aroused, it is important that the participants not lose their perspectives. The best way to retain one's perspective during a fight is to exercise a sense of humor. For example, a married couple may be arguing vehemently about finances when suddenly the husband exclaims, "Not only *that*, but you never really liked my mother!" At such moments, it is perfectly legitimate to recognize the humor of the situation and respond accordingly. In fact, the parties involved may be unable to control their laughter and subsequently may find that the fight has disintegrated. Although the tendency when engaged in a fight is to become more "righteous" as the confrontation progresses, the participants would do well to remember that it is the fight that should be taken seriously—not themselves.

SUMMARY

Training people to deal with conflict in an effective manner requires much of a facilitator. Participants must be taught that conflict is a natural part of life and that dealing with it creatively can actually enhance rather than destroy relationships.

Part of the facilitator's responsibility is to help the participants to see that there are four different sources of conflict—fact, method, objectives, and values—and that each source represents a different level of volatility. In addition, the three basic strategies for handling conflict—competition, compromise, and collaboration—should be presented and explained, and the facilitator should take care not to convey an exclusive prejudice in favor of collaboration.

When all participants are aware of the basic aspects of conflict, they should be allowed to practice fighting creatively in a relatively nonthreatening environment, such as a workshop. As they practice, the facilitator should help them to adhere to the ten guidelines that are detailed in this paper.

■ PREVENTING AND RESOLVING CONFLICT

Udai Pareek

Conflicts are not necessarily dysfunctional. Functional conflicts result in a desire for excellence and creativity and may take the form of healthy interpersonal or intergroup competition or Comp+ (Pareek, 1981). Functional conflicts also help a person to develop a sense of identity, a sense of responsibility, internal standards of performance, an urge to excel, individual creativity, and feelings of autonomy.

Conflicts are dysfunctional (Comp-) when they drain the energy of people or groups and reduce their effectiveness (Pareek, 1981). Unhealthy and dysfunctional competition often can be prevented by early diagnosis. The concept of “preventive medicine” applies to the management of conflict, as well as to the management of disease.

1	2	3	4	5
<i>Sources of Potential Conflict</i>	<i>Perception Under Conflict-Escalation Mode</i>	<i>Resultant Orientation</i>	<i>Perception Under Conflict-Prevention-and-Resolution Mode</i>	<i>Resultant Orientation</i>
Concern with Self	Narrow (Own)	Short-Term Perspective	Broader	Long-Term Perspective
Different Goals	Conflicting	Individualistic	Complementary	Superordination
Resource Issues	Limited	Fighting	Expandable	Sharing
Power Issues	Limited	Lack of Trust	Sharable	Trust
Different Ideologies	Conflicting	Stereotyping	Varied	Understanding
Varied Norms	Must Be Uniform	Intolerance	Diverse and Evolved	Tolerance
Relationship	Dependent	Dominance/ Submission	Interdependent	Empathy and Cooperation

Figure 1. Some Potential Sources of Conflict in a Group and the Perceptions of Group Members in Two Different Modes

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UNDERSTANDING THE SOURCES OF CONFLICT

Seven main sources of interpersonal and intergroup conflict are listed in the first column of Figure 1. Columns 2 and 4 show how group members perceive the various sources under each of two modes: conflict escalation or conflict prevention and resolution.

Reading across the figure, conflict is likely if group members' *main concern is with themselves*. Their perspectives will be *narrow*, and their orientation will be *short term*. It is ironic that the interests of individuals are not served properly by their being narrowly concerned with themselves. The group is likely to remain in conflict unless members can *broaden* their perceptions—what Sherif and Sherif (1953) called “superordinate goals.” Superordinate goals are those which are critical for all individuals in a group, but cannot be achieved by any one person alone. Only by all members working together can the needs of individuals be met.

Conflict is also likely if members in a group perceive their *goals as conflicting*. Instead of taking an *individualistic* orientation, members should try to meet several goals at once. This may not be difficult, as goals are often *complementary*. For example, one person may want to learn everything he or she can, and another may want to share his or her knowledge with the group. These are complementary goals that can both be met. Some people also must be willing to *subordinate* their goals for the group's good.

Often intra- or intergroup conflicts arise from difficulties on how to share available *resources*. Group members perceive the resources as *limited* and tend to *fight* over who will receive what. However, if people are able to perceive resources as *expandable*, the energy of the members may be spent on efforts to share them. Even if resources are not expandable, they can at least be perceived as *sharable*.

Power also is often perceived as *limited*. For example, in a group the “chair” position may be very important, and the person who holds it may exercise most of the power. This leads to *lack of trust* among members, and conflict results. If the chair position can be seen as *sharable*, this can lead to *trust* among members and an actual increase of power for everyone.

If *ideologies are conflicting* in a group, *stereotyping* may result, and people will act out their “parts” rather than cooperating for the good of the whole. If members of the group can accept that ideologies are *varied* and that people can work together in spite of differences, *understanding* may result.

Many groups work toward uniform norms or standards of behavior, but expectations of *uniformity* may lead to *intolerance* of differences. If group members realize that *diverse* norms always exist early in the life of a group and that in time some commonly shared norms will *evolve*, they can learn *tolerance* of the various norms and keep differences from causing conflict when they have no effect on achieving the main goals of the group.

One other basic problem, especially in intercultural groups, is what *relationships* people have to one another in a hierarchical structure. Some people are comfortable taking a dependent role, but others fight to attain positions of authority. The expectation that others should be *dependent* often results in conflicts and *dominance* or *submission*

needing to be determined for every member before the group can begin to work. If relationships are perceived as *interdependent* (that A depends on B for some things, and B depends on A for some other things), people are more likely to have *empathy* for others and to *cooperate* on problem solutions.

To summarize the discussion thus far, if people in a group perceive their own concerns to be high priority; want their own goals met at all cost; fight over available resources; distrust those in power; stereotype those with conflicting ideologies; refuse to tolerate varied norms; and attempt to dominate the group, conflicts will surely escalate. If, however, group members attempt to see differences as opportunities to *prevent* or *resolve* conflicts, they will consider the broader group concerns; realize that goals can be complementary and subordinate their own; share resources; trust those in power and share the burdens of leadership; attempt to understand separate ideologies; tolerate varied group norms; and cooperate with and have empathy for others. Conflicts cannot be resolved unless people are willing to take these risks.

STYLES OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

People usually attempt to manage conflict, once it exists, in one of three ways: (1) by avoiding the issue; (2) by approaching the problem and attempting to reach a solution; or (3) by defusing the situation and sharing in problem solving. These attitudes can be put on a continuum from avoidance to approach.

Members of a group also tend to take an “us” versus “them” view of conflict. Sometimes, an “outer” group is perceived as opposed to the interests of the “inner” group. If the outer group is seen as belligerent, conflict will seem inevitable; but if the outer group is simply seen as disinterested or distracted, conflict will seem less likely. Once conflict exists, the outer group can still be perceived in two separate ways: as unreasonable (in which case, there is little hope for a solution) or as open to reason (in which case, a solution seems possible). A combination of these two types of perception of the outer group with the avoidance-approach continuum results in the eight modes of conflict management presented in Figure 2. Determining just where a group can be placed on the avoidance-approach dimension is significant in determining the effectiveness of its behavior. Avoidance is based on fear of conflict and is dysfunctional; approach is based on optimism and is the more functional. Avoidance is characterized by a tendency to deny, rationalize, or avoid the problem; displaced anger or aggression; and emotional appeals. Approach is characterized by efforts to find a solution with the help of others.

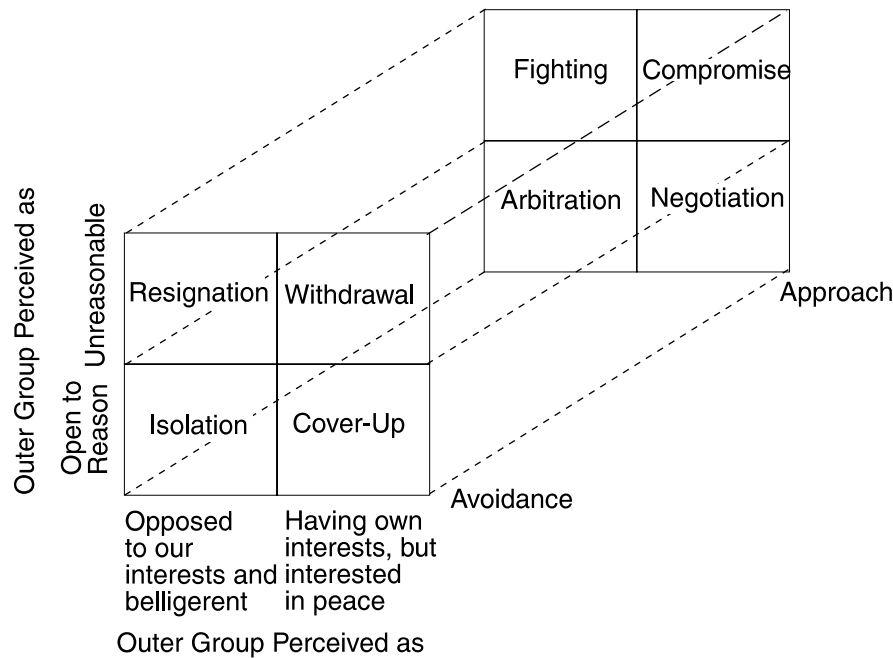


Figure 2. Eight Styles of Conflict Management

Four Avoidance Styles for Handling Conflict

Extreme avoidance of conflict—when the outer group is seen as belligerent and unreasonable—results in a fatalistic *resignation* to fate and a sense of helplessness. However, if the outer group is perceived as interested in peace, avoidance takes the form of *isolation* from the other group to minimize the opportunities of interaction (and possible conflict).

When the outer group is seen as open to reason, avoidance takes a more positive form: *withdrawal* from the conflict. If both groups are interested in keeping the peace, they may *cover up* the conflict and prevent hurt feelings or disruption. No solution is attempted—or found—for any conflict by using the avoidance modes.

Four Approach Styles for Handling Conflict

Approaching a conflict can take aggressive forms or more positive forms. If the “inner” group perceives the “outer” group both as opposed to its interests and as unreasonable, group members may opt to *fight* for a solution in their own favor. Blake, Shepard, and Mouton (1964) called this the “win-lose trap.” If the outer group is seen as interested in peace, but still unreasonable, an attempt may be made to seek a *compromise*. Both groups then share some gain, but there is no solution to the conflict. On the other hand, if the outer group is perceived as belligerent, but not unreasonable, *arbitration* by a third party may be sought to assess the situation objectively. The conflict remains unresolved but is postponed for some time. The most satisfactory solution may emerge only when both groups confront the problem through *negotiation*.

NEGOTIATION: TOWARD CONFLICT RESOLUTION

The negotiation mode of conflict resolution is the most mature of the approach-style modes. Negotiation is possible only when the other group is perceived both as interested in peace and as reasonable. Negotiation involves continuous interaction and dialog between groups in order to find a solution with maximum advantages to both. Through negotiation, mutual interests are met and the most satisfactory solution is determined. The negotiation style for managing conflict can be described in a number of steps. These steps are presented below in a sequence, but this need not be followed strictly (Pareek, 1982).

Unfreezing. Two groups in conflict may be “frozen” into a stereotyped relationship. Unless the expectations and patterns of the relationship are unfrozen, any movement toward negotiation may be impossible. To thaw out the atmosphere, group members can generate images they have of each other and of members of the other group. The ensuing discussion may provide an opportunity for members of both groups to say many things that they otherwise would not. Or members of both groups can be mixed in order to discuss some issues. In this way, people may increase their understanding of each other’s perspectives.

Being Open. Group members may be “closed” with one another and may need to develop norms of voicing different points of view or alternatives without fear of repercussions. Openness is usually most difficult when the conflict involves critical issues and the atmosphere is emotionally charged, but openness is even more vital at such times.

Learning Empathy. Group members may see only their own points of view, but can gain empathy for others by sharing their main concerns, apprehensions, or goals. Such sharing may help people to gain new insight about themselves and others.

Searching for Common Themes. Groups involved in conflict may be helped to search for common goals or other areas of overlap by listing their expectations, apprehensions, perceptions, goals, etc.

Generating Alternatives. Once the groups are aware of others’ perspectives, they can generate alternatives for solving some of the issues. If both groups participate in generating alternatives, they are likely to feel mutually responsible for finding a solution.

Responding to Alternatives. After alternatives have been generated, members of both groups should study and respond to them. Every effort should be made to see issues in a positive, problem-solving way. Outright rejection of alternatives should be avoided, but all should be discussed by the whole group for clarification and for sharing concerns.

Searching for a Solution. A number of alternatives may be explored in depth by small groups made up from members of both large groups. The small groups can reach consensus on a solution and then report to the large group. Because many points of view

are represented in the subgroupings, these groups are likely to come up with some innovative possibilities.

Breaking the Deadlock. Sometimes the conflicting groups may be so emotionally involved that they cannot move toward a solution by themselves. In such cases, a third party who is both objective and experienced with this type of problem may be brought in.

Committing to the Solution Within the Group. After solutions are generated by subgroups, the groups can debate and consider these solutions and make their commitments to some of these. Openness among group members will help for genuine commitment. All doubts must be resolved or must be put aside at this point.

Committing the Whole Group. The last phase of conflict resolution is for both groups jointly to accept a solution and to make a public commitment to implement it. Group members may share the mechanisms they plan to use for following up on the commitments made. Arrangements can also be made at this point for a joint review of any remaining issues at a later time.

Resolving conflict through negotiation involves a continuous effort on everyone's part to build a climate of openness and nondefensiveness. The success of negotiation depends on the efforts made by members of both groups to develop their own group skills. The process of negotiation itself contributes to the development of the group. The process is difficult, but extremely worthwhile.

PARTICIPATION AND COLLABORATION: TOWARD CONFLICT PREVENTION

Preventing conflict is also an approach mode. Prevention means anticipating the potential causes of conflict and taking quick action to turn them into positive forces for better understanding and cooperation. Two main strategies for prevention of conflicts are described in the following paragraphs.

Everyone concerned with a common task must be involved in order to reduce the breeding ground for conflict. Whenever problems arise, everyone must be involved in finding alternative solutions. Such participation and the resultant sense of shared responsibility for a solution help to prevent many conflicts. The solution reached through participative decision making may be much more acceptable and pragmatic than one imposed from above. Representative groups from various levels of an organization can be formed for dealing with grievances, work norms and deviations from them, procedures for employee assessment, performance criteria, etc., before the issues arise in order to prevent unhealthy conflict.

An emphasis on collaboration and team building also helps to change the potential causes of conflicts into positive forces for cooperation. The main emphasis of collaboration is on identifying common goals, recognizing each others' strengths, and planning strategies for achieving goals by working together.

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■ A TAXONOMY OF INTERGROUP CONFLICT-RESOLUTION STRATEGIES

Daniel C. Feldman

“Intergroup conflict” refers to overt expressions of hostility between groups or their intentional interference with each other’s activities. The research on intergroup conflict generally has been in five distinct areas: (1) identifying the causes of intergroup conflict (for example, Lawrence & Lorsch, 1969; Merton, 1940); (2) illustrating the dynamics of intergroup conflict (for example, Blake & Mouton, 1961a; Sherif & Sherif, 1953); (3) analyzing strategies used by groups to gain power (for example, Deutsch, 1949; Pfeffer, 1977); (4) identifying the consequences of intergroup conflict (for example, Dutton & Walton, 1965; Hammond & Goldman, 1961); and (5) examining intergroup conflict-resolution strategies (for example, Pruitt, 1971; Sherif, 1958).

The literature in this last area, intergroup conflict-resolution strategies, consists mainly of field and laboratory experimental studies. Typically, a study examines one conflict-resolution strategy in a pre- and postdesign, analyzing the effectiveness of the strategy in reducing intergroup conflict (affect, perceptions, and/or behavior). Rarely are different strategies compared, either empirically or conceptually. This article presents a taxonomy of intergroup conflict-resolution strategies that frequently are used in organizations and discusses the circumstances in which each strategy is most effective.

The primary dimension along which intergroup conflict-resolution strategies vary is how openly they address the conflict. The chief characteristic of *conflict-avoidance* strategies is that they attempt to keep the conflict from coming into the open. The goal of *conflict-defusion* strategies is to keep the conflict in abeyance and to “cool” the emotions of the parties involved. *Conflict-containment* strategies allow some conflict to surface, but tightly control which issues are discussed and the manner in which they are discussed. *Conflict-confrontation* strategies are designed to uncover all of the issues of the conflict and to try to find a mutually satisfactory solution.

CONFLICT-AVOIDANCE STRATEGIES

Ignoring the Conflict

This strategy is represented by the absence of action. Managers, for example, often avoid dealing with the dysfunctional aspects of conflict. Unfortunately, when they avoid

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searching for the causes of the conflict, the situation usually continues or becomes worse over time. However, although ignoring the conflict generally is ineffective for resolving important policy issues, there are some circumstances in which it is at least a reasonable way of dealing with problems. One such circumstance is when the conflict issue is trivial. For example, there may be differences of opinion about the wisdom of allowing employees time to attend a one-time training program. This is such a short-run, temporary issue that it does not warrant much attention.

Another circumstance in which ignoring the conflict is a reasonable strategy is when the issue seems to be symptomatic of other, more basic conflicts. For example, two groups may experience conflict over the amount and quality of office space. Such conflicts often reflect more important issues about relative power and status. Resolving the office-space problem would not address the key issues, and attention could be directed more fruitfully to the more basic concerns (Thomas, 1977).

Imposing a Solution

This strategy consists of forcing the conflicting parties to accept a solution devised by a higher-level manager. Imposing a solution does not allow much conflict to surface, nor does it leave room for the participants to air their grievances, so it also generally is an ineffective conflict-resolution strategy. Any peace that it does achieve is likely to be short-lived. Because the underlying issues are not addressed, the conflict reappears in other guises and in other situations.

Forcing a solution can, however, be appropriate when quick, decisive action is needed. For instance, when there is conflict over investment decisions, and delays can be very costly, forcing a solution may be the best strategy available to top management. Likewise, it may be necessary when unpopular decisions must be made and there is very little chance that the parties involved could ever reach agreement (Thomas, 1977). An example of this is when a university must cut back on the funding of academic programs. It is unreasonable to expect that any department would agree to cut its staff and students for the greater good; yet some hard, unpleasant decisions ultimately must be made.

CONFLICT-DEFUSION STRATEGIES

Smoothing

One way that a manager can deal with conflict is to try to “smooth it over” by playing down its extent or importance. The manager might try to persuade the groups that they are not so far apart in their viewpoints as they think they are, point out the similarities in their positions, try to appease group members whose feelings have been hurt, or downplay the importance of the issue. By smoothing the conflict, managers hope to decrease its intensity and avoid escalation or open hostility. Like forcing a solution, smoothing generally is ineffective because it does not address the key points of conflict.

However, smoothing sometimes can serve as a stop-gap measure to let people cool down and regain perspective. In the heat of battle, people may make statements that are likely to escalate the conflict; and smoothing often can bring the disagreement back to a manageable level. Smoothing also may be appropriate when the conflict concerns nonwork-related issues. For instance, as Alderfer (1977) points out, intergroup conflict frequently occurs between older and younger employees because of their different political beliefs and moral values. Smoothing can help to defuse the tension so that the conflict does not spill over into central work issues.

Appealing to Superordinate Goals

Managers can defuse conflict by focusing attention on the higher goals that the groups share or the long-range aims that they have in common. This approach tends to make the current problem seem insignificant beside the more important mutual goals (Sherif, 1958).

Finding superordinate goals that are important to both groups is not easy. Achieving these goals requires cooperation between the groups, so the rewards for achieving the goals must be significant. The most successful and most frequently used superordinate goal is organizational survival: If the subunits do not cooperate sufficiently, the continued existence of the larger organization itself will be severely jeopardized.

CONFLICT-CONTAINMENT STRATEGIES

Using Representatives

One of the strategies that managers use to contain conflict is the use of representatives. In order to decide an issue, they meet with representatives of the opposing groups rather than dealing with the groups in their entirety. The rationale is that the representatives know the problems and can argue the groups' points of view accurately and forcefully (Blake & Mouton, 1961b).

Although this seems to be a logical way of proceeding, the research on the use of representatives as a means of solving intergroup conflict is fairly negative. Representatives are not entirely free to engage in compromise; rather, they must act out of loyalty and are motivated to win (or at least to avoid defeat) even though a solution to the intergroup problem may be sacrificed in the process. A representative who "gives in" is likely to face suspicion or rejection from group members; consequently, if a representative cannot win, he or she will try to deadlock a solution or at least forestall defeat. In one study (Blake & Mouton, 1961b), only two of sixty-two representatives capitulated to the opposition; all other situations with representatives ended in deadlock.

Although individual representatives have difficulty in negotiating an agreement because of their fear of rejection by their groups, two situational factors can increase the effectiveness of this strategy. First, the use of *groups* of representatives from each side can help to overcome individual anxiety about group rejection. The members of each

team can provide mutual support when they need to make concessions in order to achieve agreement. Second, groups of negotiators may receive broader support and trust from their respective sides, as each representative may represent a different constituency or bring a different expertise to the negotiations. Most labor negotiations involve several representatives of both management and labor.

Resolving conflict through representatives is more effective before positions become fixed or are made public. After positions become fixed, representatives become even more intransigent; and “giving in” is more likely to be attributed to the personal failure of the representatives than to situational factors.

Structuring the Interaction Between the Groups

Some managers assume that one way to decrease conflict is to increase the *amount* of contact between the groups (if the groups interacted more, they would like each other better and fight less). In reality, increased interaction can merely add fuel to the fire; the two groups spend their time looking for additional reasons to reinforce their negative stereotypes of each other.

However, *structuring* the interaction between the groups can be effective in resolving conflict. Providing constraints on how many issues are discussed and the manner in which they are discussed can facilitate conflict resolution. There are many ways to structure the interaction between groups to deal with conflict; some of the most effective strategies include the following:

- Decreasing the amount of direct interaction between the groups in the early stages of conflict resolution;
- Decreasing the amount of time between problem-solving meetings;
- Decreasing the formality of the presentation of issues;
- Limiting the recitation of historic events and precedents and focusing instead on current issues and goals; and
- Using third-party mediators.

All of these strategies allow some conflict to surface and be addressed, but prevent it from getting out of hand and hardening the groups' positions. Decreasing the amount of direct interaction between the groups early in the conflict helps to prevent the conflict from escalating. Decreasing the amount of time between problem-solving meetings helps to prevent backsliding from tentative agreements. Decreasing the formality of the presentation of issues helps to induce a problem-solving, rather than a win-lose, orientation to the conflict. Limiting how far back historically and how widely precedents can be cited helps to keep the focus on finding a solution to the current conflict. Finally, a mediator can act as a go-between who transmits offers and messages, helps the groups to clarify their positions, presents each group's position more clearly to the other, and suggests some possible solutions that are not obvious to the opposing parties (Wexley & Yukl, 1977).

Structuring the interaction is especially useful in two situations: (1) when previous attempts to discuss conflict issues openly led to conflict escalation rather than to problem solution and (2) when a respected third party is available to provide (and enforce) some structure in the interactions between the groups.

Bargaining

Bargaining is the process of exchanging concessions until a compromise solution is reached.

Bargaining can lead to the resolution of a conflict, but usually without much openness on the part of the groups involved and without much real problem solving. Typically, in bargaining each side begins by demanding more than it really expects to get. Both sides realize that concessions will be necessary in order to reach a solution, but neither side wants to make the first concession because it may be perceived as a sign of weakness. Thus, each party signals a willingness to be flexible in exchanging concessions without actually making an explicit offer; a tacit proposal can be denied later if it fails to elicit a positive response from the other party (Pruitt, 1971). Bargaining continues until a mutually satisfactory agreement is reached between the two groups, although such a solution can be reached without much open discussion of the conflict issues and without much effort to solve the underlying problems. Therefore, bargaining often results in a compromise agreement that fails to deal with the problem in a rational manner and is not in the long-term interests of both groups.

For bargaining to be feasible at all as a conflict-resolution strategy, both parties must be of relatively equal power. Otherwise, one group simply will impose its will on the other, and the weaker group will have no means of obtaining concessions from the stronger one. Bargaining also is more likely to work if there are several acceptable alternatives that both groups are willing to consider. Otherwise, bargaining is likely to end in a deadlock.

CONFLICT-CONFRONTATION STRATEGIES

Problem Solving

Problem solving is an attempt to find a solution that reconciles or integrates the needs of both parties, who work together to define the problem and to identify mutually satisfactory solutions. In problem solving there is open expression of feelings as well as exchange of task-related information. Alderfer (1977) and Wexley and Yukl (1977) summarize the most critical ingredients in successful problem solving:

1. Definition of the problem should be a joint effort based on shared fact finding rather than on the biased perceptions of the individual groups.
2. Problems should be stated in terms of specifics rather than as abstract principles.

3. Points of initial agreement in the goals and beliefs of both groups should be identified along with the differences.
4. Discussions between the groups should consist of specific, nonevaluative comments. Questions should be asked to elicit information, not to belittle the opposition.
5. The groups should work together in developing alternative solutions. If this is not feasible, each group should present a range of acceptable solutions rather than promoting the solution that is best for it while concealing other possibilities.
6. Solutions should be evaluated objectively in terms of quality and acceptability to the two groups. When a solution maximizes joint benefits but favors one party, some way should be found to provide special benefits to the other party to make the solution equitable.
7. All agreements about separate issues should be considered tentative until every issue is dealt with, because issues that are interrelated cannot be settled independently in an optimal manner (Blake & Mouton, 1962, 1964; Walton & McKersie, 1965).

There are two preconditions for successful, integrative problem solving. The first precondition is a minimal level of trust between the two groups. Without trust, each group will fear manipulation and will be unlikely to reveal its true preferences. Second, integrative problem solving takes a lot of time and can succeed only in the absence of pressure for a quick settlement. However, when the organization can benefit from merging the differing perspectives and insights of the two groups in making key decisions, integrative problem solving is especially needed.

Organizational Redesign

Redesigning or restructuring the organization can be an effective, intergroup conflict-resolution strategy. This is especially true when the sources of conflict result from the coordination of work among different departments or divisions. Unlike the other strategies discussed so far, however, organizational redesign can be used either to decrease the conflict or to increase it.

One way of redesigning organizations is to reduce task interdependence between groups and to assign each group clear work responsibilities (that is, create self-contained work groups) to reduce conflict. This is most appropriate when the work can be divided easily into distinct projects. Each group is provided with clear project responsibilities and the resources needed to reach its goals. A potential cost of this strategy is duplication and waste of resources, particularly when one group cannot fully utilize equipment or personnel. Innovation and growth also may be restricted to existing project areas (Duncan, 1979), with no group having the incentive or responsibility to create new ideas.

The other way to deal with conflict through organizational redesign is to develop overlapping or joint work responsibilities (for example, integrator roles). This makes the most use of the different perspectives and abilities of the different departments, but it also tends to create conflict. On the other hand, there may be tasks (for example, developing new products) that do not fall clearly into any one department's responsibilities but require the contributions, expertise, and coordination of several. Assigning new-product development to one department could decrease potential conflict, but at a high cost to the quality of the product. In this case the organization might try to sustain task-based conflict but develop better mechanisms for managing the conflict. For example, providing "integrating teams" can facilitate communication and coordination between the members of interdependent departments (Galbraith, 1974).

SUMMARY

The main dimension along which intergroup conflict-resolution strategies are arrayed is how openly they address the conflict: Conflict-avoidance and conflict-defusion strategies allow little or no conflict into the open; conflict-containment and conflict-confrontation strategies deal with the conflict more openly and thoroughly (see Table 1).

Which strategy is most effective depends on how critical the conflict is to task accomplishment and how quickly the conflict must be resolved. If the conflict arises from a trivial issue and/or must be resolved quickly, a conflict-avoidance or conflict-defusion strategy is most likely to be effective. If the conflict centers around an important work issue and does not need to be solved quickly, a conflict-containment or conflict-confrontation strategy is most likely to be effective.

Table 1. Conflict-Resolution Strategies

Conflict-Resolution Strategy	Goal of Strategy	Appropriate Situations
Ignoring the conflict	Avoidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ When the issue is trivial ▪ When the issue is symptomatic of more basic, pressing problems
Imposing a solution	Avoidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ When quick, decisive action is needed ▪ When unpopular decisions must be made, and consensus between the groups appears very unlikely
Smoothing	Defusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ As a stop-gap measure to let people cool down and regain their perspective ▪ When the conflict is over nonwork issues
Superordinate goals	Defusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ When there is a mutually important goal that neither group can achieve without the cooperation of the other ▪ When the survival or success of the total organization is in jeopardy
Representatives	Containment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Before the groups' positions become fixed and made public ▪ When each side is represented by groups of representatives rather than by one spokesman
Structuring the interaction	Containment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ When the previous attempts to openly discuss conflict issues led to conflict escalation rather than to problem solution ▪ When a respected third party is available to provide structure and serve as a mediator
Bargaining	Containment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ When the two groups have relatively equal power ▪ When there are several acceptable, alternative solutions that both parties are willing to consider
Problem solving	Confrontation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ When there is a minimum level of trust between the two groups and no pressure for a quick solution ▪ When the organization can benefit from merging the different perspectives and insights of both groups in making key decisions
Organizational redesign	Confrontation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ When the sources of conflict result from the coordination of work ▪ Self-contained work groups are most appropriate when the work easily can be divided into clear project responsibilities; lateral relationships are more appropriate when activities require much interdepartmental coordination but do not clearly lie within any one department's responsibilities

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■ USE OF THE COLLABORATIVE ETHIC AND CONTINGENCY THEORIES IN CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Susan Hoefflinger Taft

As U.S. organizations are changing, social forces from within and international pressures from without are causing managers to reexamine the basic principles of management practice. In an era of rapid change and high uncertainty, the management of conflict and differences assumes an important role in assuring organizational viability.

The appreciation of differences is a central tenet of conflict management. Organizations are becoming increasingly diverse and are grappling with ways and means to capitalize on the diversity. At the same time, the open-system nature of organizations requires a receptivity to the inputs and forces of the environment. Openness requires a respect for and understanding of differences.

In the absence of important stakes—resources, opportunities, power, and control—differences between people are rarely a cause of conflict. In the presence of these stakes, however, and usually in direct proportion to them, conflict arises and escalates. The form of the conflict can be as simple as a difference of opinion between two colleagues, a supervisor and a subordinate, or two groups with differing core tasks; or it can be as complex as differences among U.S. senators who are trying to formulate international policy and pass legislation. The management of conflict in widely varying contexts requires a complex set of interpersonal and cognitive skills to locate and manipulate the key stakes.

Only recently has research in conflict management taken full account of the complex nature of conflict and the wide range of stakes to which incumbents may be attached. The call in the literature for more contingency theories (Filley, 1978; Robbins, 1978; Thomas, 1978; Thomas, Jamieson, & Moore, 1978) reflects our developing interest in finding comprehensive and flexible tools. This article reviews some of the theoretical heritage of conflict management. Based on the ideas of this heritage, a conflict-intervention process will be described.

Two schools of thought in conflict management are useful for the intervention process described later in this paper. These are the “collaboration ethic” (Thomas, 1977, 1978) and “contingency” approaches. The intervention process draws on the creative

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usefulness of working with several different frames of reference—collaboration as a value position and contingency approaches as tools of flexibility.

Collaboration has been “variously called ‘confrontation,’ ‘problem solving,’ ‘integrating,’ and ‘integrative bargaining.’ This behavioral mode seeks joint optimization of the concerns of two or more parties, with an emphasis on openness and trust. Advocates for this mode have often lapsed into absolutism” (Thomas, 1977, p. 485). This reference to absolutism implies that collaboration has been taken as a single-value stance without an acknowledgement of the benefits and efficacy of multi-value stances. The second school, contingency theory, addresses this limitation.

Contingency theories acknowledge complexity. They direct the manager to an appreciation of the multiple factors—the contingencies—involved in a conflict, because a suitable strategy can often be derived by considering these contingencies. The strategy may be collaborative, it may involve accommodation, or it may alter power relationships or adjust resources.

THE COLLABORATION ETHIC

Collaboration as an approach to conflict management was first elaborated by Mary Parker Follett in the early years of the Twentieth Century. Because her classic work influenced many subsequent theorists and became the underpinning of the collaborative ethic, a closer look at some of her ideas is appropriate. In the collection of her papers by Metcalf & Urwick (1940, p. 30), her simple definition of conflict—“the appearance of difference, difference of opinions, of interest”—suggests that conflict results from the richness of diverse human interaction. She delineates three primary methods for dealing with conflict.

The first of these methods is *domination*, synonymous with the current-day term “competition,” which provides for the victory of one side over the other. This method is easiest in the short run, requiring relatively little expenditure of time or energy, but it is often unsuccessful in the long run. The issues leading to the original conflict will often resurface later under the domination mode.

The second method is *compromise*, which is a common way to settle controversy. In compromise, each side gives something up for the sake of peace or resolution. Since some degree of sacrifice is involved, unsatisfied needs and wants are likely to resurface again later, as with domination.

Follett’s third method of resolving conflict is *integration*, which is synonymous with “collaboration.” Integration is a dialectical process: both parties speak to their needs, desires, and visions. As clarity emerges around the issues of both sides, inventiveness is used to seek an original, higher-order synthesis. The integration process supports and encourages diversity. Follett asserts the need for both sides to be highly self-interested; for without this characteristic, the data supplied will be insufficient to enable both parties to find a creative solution. Integration eliminates a win-lose attitude. Follett believes that “there are always more than two alternatives in a situation, and our

job is to analyze the situation carefully enough for as many as possible to appear” (Metcalf & Urwick, 1940, pp. 219–220). Diversity is united, the integrity of both parties is protected, and creative problem solving is advanced; these benefits accrue to the parties in conflict as well as, in a ripple effect, to society in general (Metcalf & Urwick, 1940). Follett considers integration a qualitative adjustment and compromise a quantitative one. An integrative experience is a progressive experience, because it moves both parties forward.

Integration, however, as a method for conflict resolution is not always possible. Follett (1951, p. 163) admits that “not all differences...can be integrated. That we must face fully, but it is certain that there are fewer irreconcilable activities than we at present think, although it often takes ingenuity, a ‘creative intelligence,’ to find the integration.” Other writers agree that integration is not always possible, but it may be useful more often than most people realize (Deutsch, 1969; Katz & Kahn, 1966). Many people find it easier to fight than to work constructively toward mutually satisfying conflict solutions.

Follett emphasized examining the conflict process as part of integrative resolutions. Messages between parties in conflict may include subtle or nonverbal cues, and a look at only the content of the message may lead one on a convoluted chase. Process cues can, at times, help to locate key issues quickly. Attending to both the content and the process enhances the likelihood of a collaborative solution.

Intellectually analytic activities are necessary in the pursuit of successful collaborative outcomes. Eiseman (1977, 1978) uses the development of a conceptual framework for looking at the parties’ desires, beliefs, experiences, and behavior. The issue in contention is *reframed* intellectually so that opposing sides locate a perspective compatible to both. Reframing can involve moving toward more *abstract* ideals (e.g., “What is our common vision of what is best for the organization as a whole?”) or toward more *concrete* concerns (e.g., “If we implement this policy, how are employees likely to respond?”). Moving between the abstract and concrete poles will assist in seeing the total situation. True to the spirit of collaboration, Eiseman (1978, p. 134) considers a conflict resolved “only when each party is convinced that his or her final way of thinking about the conflict embodies not only his initial position, but also those of his adversaries.”

The manner in which individuals engage in conflict tends to draw on a few preferred behaviors. One model for identifying conflict style is oriented along two axes representing self-interest and concern for others (Thomas, 1976). Collaborative problem solving requires both a high degree of concern for self and a great amount of empathy for the other party. This view incorporates and synthesizes potentially opposing desires: the desire to win and the need to cooperate. Five conflict-handling orientations are plotted on the model, with collaborative behaviors initially representing the ideal orientation (high self-interest and high concern for others).

Subsequently, Thomas began to question the ideal status of collaboration, and his views illustrate the rising popularity of contingency theory. Differing values and situations may call for the functionally useful application of modes other than

collaborating: competing, compromising, avoiding, and accommodating (Thomas, 1977). Although collaborating may be an idealized and valued strategy, it is not always possible or efficacious. A simplistic normative prescription for collaboration denies the inherent variability and complexity of life in modern-day organizations.

The foregoing views were selected to illustrate some of the history and ideas on the collaborative ethic. Although collaboration is a rich and provocative heritage and useful in managing many forms of conflict, it has limitations, which include the following:

1. An assumption basic to collaboration theory is the existence of two clearly defined sides or camps. In reality, the network of allies may take the form of a meandering chain with various degrees of wants and needs centered around multiple foci.
2. The collaborative ethic fails to address power inequities that are frequently present in conflict situations. For example, it is naive to believe that a collaborative spirit is all that is necessary to solve every conflict between a supervisor and subordinate.
3. The collaborative ethic assumes that both parties have good will and a desire to achieve the best possible outcome. However, conflict—by definition—assumes the presence of stakes; therefore, even the most honorable intentions may be derailed as parties examine their differences.

CONTINGENCY APPROACHES

The complexity of society—local, national, and international—is paralleled in organizations. It is a rare organization that does not need to cope with extensive social diversity and worldwide economic forces while pursuing its mission. Contingency theory takes into account variation, diversity, and complexity. Instead of advancing a normative prescription, it assists in the analysis of situations based on a range of intervening factors.

A contingency view of the collaborative ethic suggests that collaboration may be the best alternative when certain conditions are present: power equalization between parties; present and future interdependence; mutual interest in solving the problem; openness; organizational support and procedures for collaboration; and a desire to defeat the problem rather than the opponent (Derr, 1978; Phillips & Cheston, 1979). When sufficient conditions are not present for collaboration, other modes may be more useful. The absence of motivation to resolve a conflict may lead logically and functionally to an avoidance posture. Sharply differing value systems within an organization may be best coaxed into peaceful coexistence through compromise. The need for quick action may call for, at least temporarily, competing behaviors. Social credits and debits can be tallied through accommodation maneuvers, to be drawn on in the next conflict. Varying demands of a situation influence the choice of conflict strategy (Derr, 1978; Filley, 1978; Phillips & Cheston, 1979; Robbins, 1978; Thomas, 1977, 1978). Choices are

contingent on a range of relevant factors, and managers are denied a quick and simple prescription for conflict interventions.

Power inequities make a major impact on conflict situations, and contingency theorists recognize this dynamic influence. Successful collaborative outcomes in the absence of power parity are difficult, and yet power differentials between conflicting parties are quite prevalent. Power may be associated with a host of factors: significant resources (money, information, connections to important people), legitimate authority, social demographic characteristics, alliances and positioning, facility with language, knowledge, and more.

Fisher and Ury (1981) explicitly address power inequities in negotiation. Much of their work is based on collaboration theory, for example, working to surface basic interests of parties rather than taking positions (which tend to become hardened and entrenched during negotiations). They propose using the following strategies when the opponent wields power:

1. Develop your best alternative to a negotiated agreement. Protect yourself from making an agreement that is not in your best interest.
2. Focus on the merits (i.e., the principles you and they wish to obtain in the outcome) rather than on positions.
3. Avoid defensiveness and counterattacking. Invite their criticism and advice. Ask questions.
4. Consider bringing in a third party.

Their book is rich with techniques and methods for conflict management. Although their philosophy is consistent with the collaborative ethic, it extends one's options for dealing with a variety of common contingencies. A limitation to the theory is the continued exploration of conflict between two parties without addressing the phenomenon as a disparate, multifocused, ubiquitous resident of organizations.

Locating and defining the most germane conflict in an organization is a first and difficult task confronting the conflict manager. Behind every conflict there may lurk a small army of disparate employees, each with individual beliefs, perceptions, and stakes. Choosing the pertinent issue and addressing the most relevant interests are not simple tasks; frequently managers are caught in this bog and try to solve the wrong problem. What may look on the surface like a classic case of conflict between two stakeholders, and therefore between two parties, may take on subtle and varied nuances as the manager digs deeper to find the real sources of tension experienced by organizational members. Elusiveness of clearly definable sides in a conflict is common in real organizations.

The complex nature of conflict in organizations and the need for analytic tools are addressed in Brown's (1983) comprehensive theory. An extensive contingency framework is developed to assist managers and organizational theorists in the management of conflict. Focusing on a conflict interface, Brown conducts an in-depth examination of the fields or clusters of people grouped around the conflict. His most

significant contribution is to tackle ambitiously, the complexity of organizational conflict and to suggest “countervailing” strategies tailored to the situation. Because of the extent of detail, Brown’s theory is difficult to summarize; yet a few words on the framework are necessary for any review of contingency theories.

A central tenet of Brown’s theory is that conflict may exist in different quantities in organizations: too much, too little, or a productive amount. The dynamics of conflict may lead to problem solving or bargaining (productive), escalation (too much), or suppression or withdrawal (too little). An initial diagnosis by the manager should determine if conflict is at the right level. Too often conflict is attended to only when in abundance. It is, however, unhealthy for an organization to have too little conflict, because this condition means that the natural and creative diversity of the entity is not being expressed. Brown also addresses in-depth intervention strategies relevant to the diagnosis at hand: redirecting behavior, reallocating resources, perspectives, and realigning underlying forces.

Brown’s theory is an important and long-awaited addition to the conflict-management literature. It helps in understanding why the use of limited tools in conflict management may lead to frustration, at worst, or incomplete success, at best. His theory views organizations as multifaceted and multifocused and recommends a fully-equipped tool chest in searching for optimum outcomes. A criticism of his work, however, is that practicing managers find the complex theory difficult to comprehend and use.

Although contingency theories address some of the limitations of the collaborative ethic, they still have shortcomings, including the following:

1. Guiding values, although present, are less apparent in contingency approaches than in the collaborative ethic. Approaches to conflict management may become driven by pragmatics rather than by values, leading to a “whatever works” attitude.
2. Many contingency theories are complex and difficult to remember, making them less accessible and useful than are simple frameworks.
3. Little has been done to integrate contingency theories, leaving students of conflict resolution with confusing choices. The respective strengths and weaknesses of the theories have not been examined in any comprehensive way, and no guidelines exist to direct the choices. Often the theories seem to say only “it depends.”

A CONFLICT INTERVENTION PROCESS

A set of approaches—based on the theories that have been reviewed—have been designed to assist managers in conflict management. The set of approaches suggests a process that supports both collaborative outcomes and the use of choices based on relevant contingencies. The process includes analyzing, diagnosing, and intervening.

Four Approaches to Conflict Inquiry

Most conflict phenomena in organizations are complex, with multiple stakeholders, goals, group interests, and personal motivations behind any significant conflict. Resolving a conflict without having a broad information base on which to make decisions almost ensures that some form of the same conflict will emerge again. The process described in this article helps to expand the information available to managers by surfacing needs, wishes, goals, role issues, and the nature of the interactive process between conflicting parties. It is also useful for extending one's conceptualization of the dimensions of a conflict process and the range of access points for intervention. The process is simple enough to be remembered and used with ease.

This conflict-intervention process relies on the use of two dimensions in analyzing a situation: the *conflict-content/conflict-process* dimension, and the *abstract/concrete* reframing dimension.

1. *Conflict content* refers to the nature of the disagreement, the stakes involved, and what is being kept or given up.
2. *Conflict process* refers to the nature of the interaction over the content and to the way the parties conduct themselves with each other, vis-a-vis the content, both verbally and nonverbally.
3. *Reframing toward the abstract (up)* refers to the use of cognitive processes to search for higher principles or more generalized ways of conceptualizing the issues than are currently being exhibited.
4. *Reframing toward the concrete (down)* refers to the use of cognitive processes to bring the conflict "home" (i.e., to the parties' own felt needs and motivations), to review practical implications, and to increase ownership of the problem.

These dimensions provide direction for diagnosing conflict and intervening in it. They can be illustrated with a matrix, as shown in Figure 1, in which four approaches emerge.

	Conflict Content	Conflict Process
Reframing Toward Abstract (Up)	Content Reframing Up	Process Reframing Up
Reframing Toward Concrete (Down)	Content Reframing Down	Process Reframing Down

Figure 1. Approaches Emerging from Content/Process and Reframing Dimensions

Figure 2 illustrates how each of the four approaches could be used in reframing a conflict between two departments of an organization. This situation involves interdependencies.

Figure 3 illustrates how each of the approaches could be used when the conflict involves two employees of equal rank.

Figure 4 illustrates the approaches when the conflict is between a supervisor and subordinate.

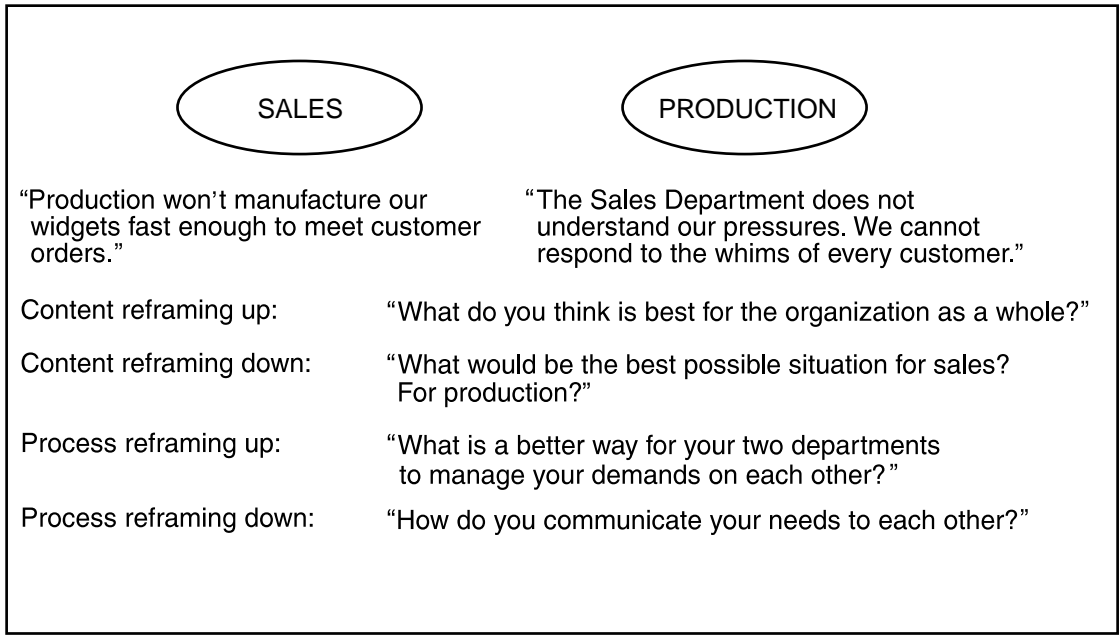


Figure 2. Two Departments in Conflict over Meeting Each Other’s Organizational Needs (Interdependencies)

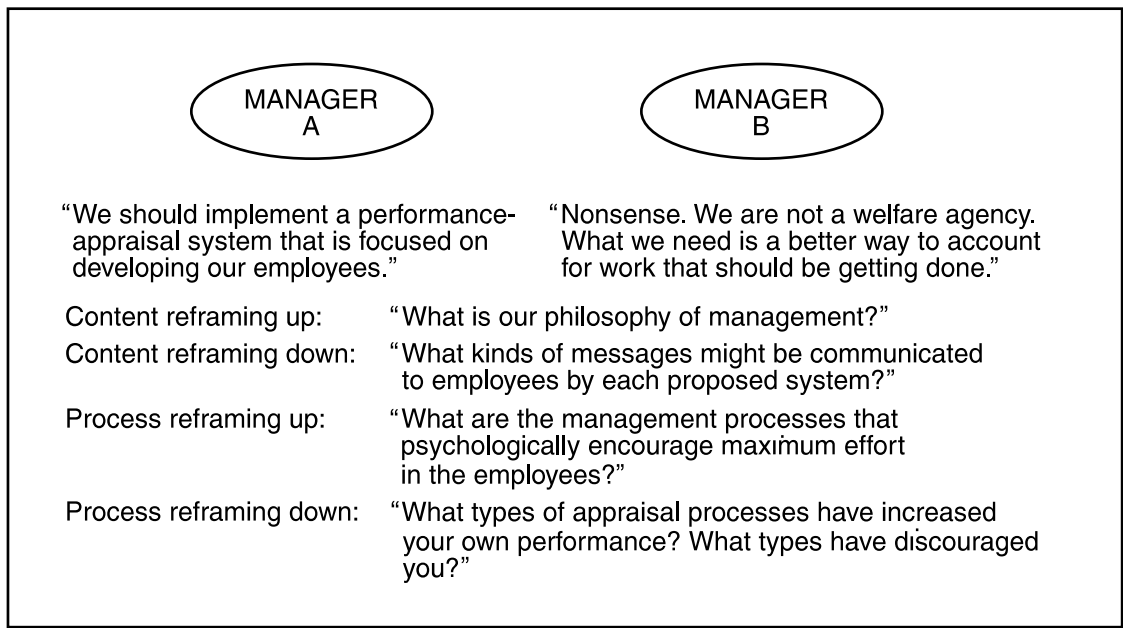


Figure 3. Two Managers in Conflict over a Performance-Appraisal System

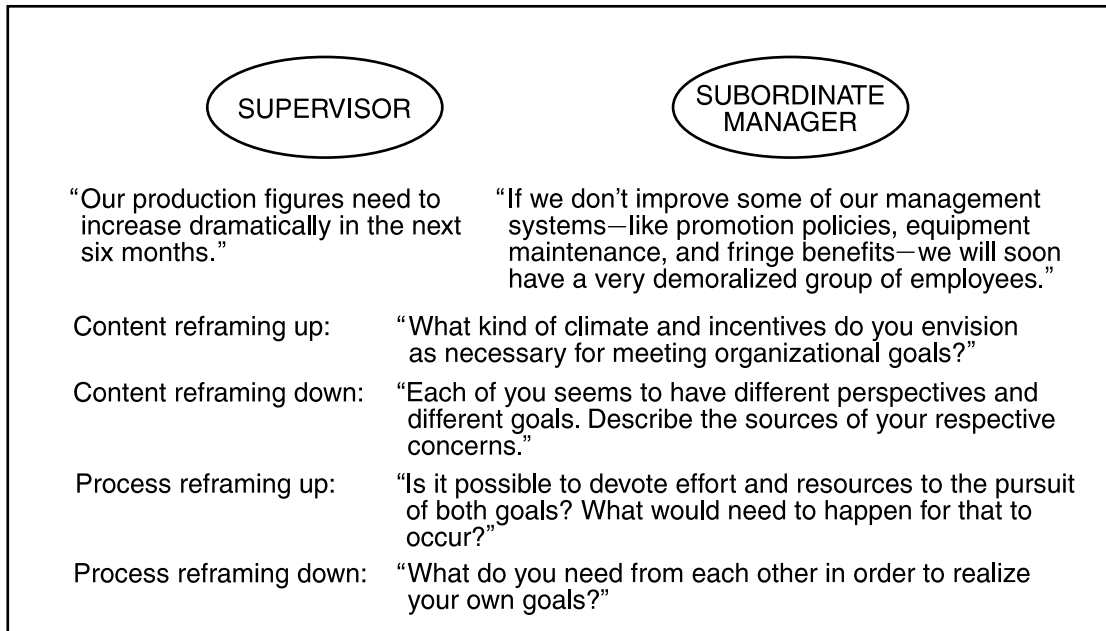


Figure 4. Conflict Between Supervisor and Subordinate Manager over Organizational Priorities

The examples in Figures 2 through 4 illustrate the flexibility one can enjoy by using a reframing approach along the process/content and abstract/concrete dimensions. The use of new dimensions in a conflict situation may assist the conflicting parties to view and respond to the conflict with fresh and potentially creative perspectives. The conflicting parties would then be able to provide more accurate answers to the following questions: Is collaboration possible and desirable? What contingencies influence the situation? Is this a focused conflict or a multifocused, elusive conflict? Are major changes needed to resolve the issues? Can the perspectives be altered through reframing activities? Such an inquiry process, which draws on both collaborative and contingency-based methods, would help to clarify the parameters of the conflict and the extent of the intervention needed to manage the situation.

Guidelines for Choosing an Approach

The following guiding principles are helpful in choosing a reframing approach:

1. Try reframing the content when:
 - The inherent stakes are unknown;
 - The social context is relevant but incompletely acknowledged;
 - Differences in goals or roles have not been examined;
 - A win-lose or we-they battle line has been drawn; and/or
 - Relevant reference groups influence the thinking of the parties.

2. Try reframing the process when:
 - Power inequities exist;
 - Parties exhibit exaggerated posturing toward one another;
 - Behavior seems to be occurring without much reflective thought;
 - Responsibility for personal behavior and experience is missing from the interchanges; and/or
 - Ongoing interdependence is necessary.
3. Try reframing toward the abstract (up) when:
 - Disagreement at a personal or parochial level is present;
 - Narrow values are being served; and/or
 - Personal feelings have served to paralyze progress.
4. Try reframing toward the concrete (down) when:
 - Arguing over principles is creating a stalemate;
 - Sweeping generalizations or stereotypes serve to separate personal experience from the discussion; and/or
 - The dilemmas of the parties' own feelings have not been explored.

The conflict-intervention process that has been described is most easily implemented when conflict is focused, as in paired conflict. It can also be useful in multifocal conflicts as a method by which information is surfaced and the problem elaborated, enabling parties to improve comprehension of the phenomenon and choose strategies based on full information. The simplicity of the framework makes it easy to remember and therefore readily useful to managers.

The reframing process helps to facilitate conflict management, regardless of whether collaborative or contingency approaches are subsequently pursued. It is rooted in the values and processes of collaboration (i.e., attention to both process and content, the seeking of a higher-order synthesis, creative outcome, and attention to both personal and social values), which discourage a "whatever works" mentality. At the same time, contingency thinking is a natural outcome of the reframing process, because complex intervening factors are surfaced and examined.

A search for new and more refined uses of contingency strategies should not disregard the values, principles, and ideals behind the collaborative ethic. In fact, collaboration is more than an ethic; it is a fundamental human drive and is critically needed in complex social forms of organizations. As an ideological orientation, collaboration actualizes many preferred values: mutualism, acceptance of diversity, common vision, and dialectical creativity. Nevertheless, more comprehensive tools for conflict management are still needed. Much remains to be done in the way of testing, altering, and expanding theories that have recently appeared. Differing theories may be needed for different contexts. The question still remains, for example, about the

differences in conflict-management strategies among various types of organizations (e.g., manufacturing plants, high-technology service organizations, and government agencies).

In the meantime, the author hopes that this discussion will assist the reader in recognizing different schools of thought that are available for conflict management and that it will provide useful tools for diagnosing conflict and making appropriate interventions.

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■ MANAGING CONFLICT AND DISAGREEMENT CONSTRUCTIVELY

Herbert S. Kindler

Abstract: A vital part of a trainer's or consultant's repertoire is being able to manage—and teach others to manage—conflict and disagreements. The five-mode model, for managing conflict, introduced in 1964 by Blake and Mouton, was useful in stable organization environments. However, today's rapid changes in organizational systems and technologies require more skills and more options.

This article introduces three core principles to apply when engaging in conflict management, nine strategies—with varying degrees of flexibility and intensity—that can be selected or combined when dealing with others in a conflict situation, and a systematic process for diagnosing, planning, implementing, and following up any attempt to manage conflict and disagreement constructively.

It is common to hear people in organizations say something like the following about disagreement:

- “I hate the endless arguing—and feeling trapped by having to listen to someone's stored-up anger.”
- “Nothing is less productive than dancing around our differences. People don't really change their minds.”

Unskillfully or insensitively managed conflict results in bickering, bruised feelings, wasted time, and unproductive rivalry. In contrast, when disagreement is handled well, opportunities arise for learning, cooperative work, and creative ideas. Teamwork improves, stress is reduced, trust is built, and people feel more committed to agreed-on decisions.

THE CONCEPTS

Managing conflict well requires conceptual tools, sensitivity, and practice. To facilitate the constructive resolution of conflict, a five-mode model (Blake and Mouton, 1964) was introduced. This model is still used by many consultants because it is easy to teach and learn. It was adequate when technology and the competitive environment were more stable. Nevertheless, contemporary managers need all the help they can get to improve productivity and maintain staff commitment. A research-based, comprehensive, nine-strategies model for managing conflict and disagreement (Kindler, 1994) is better suited for use in flatter organizations that experience more fluid relationships.

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The following sections contain three core principles, nine strategies, and a four-step process (Figure 1) that can help any consultant's success rate in dealing with conflict.

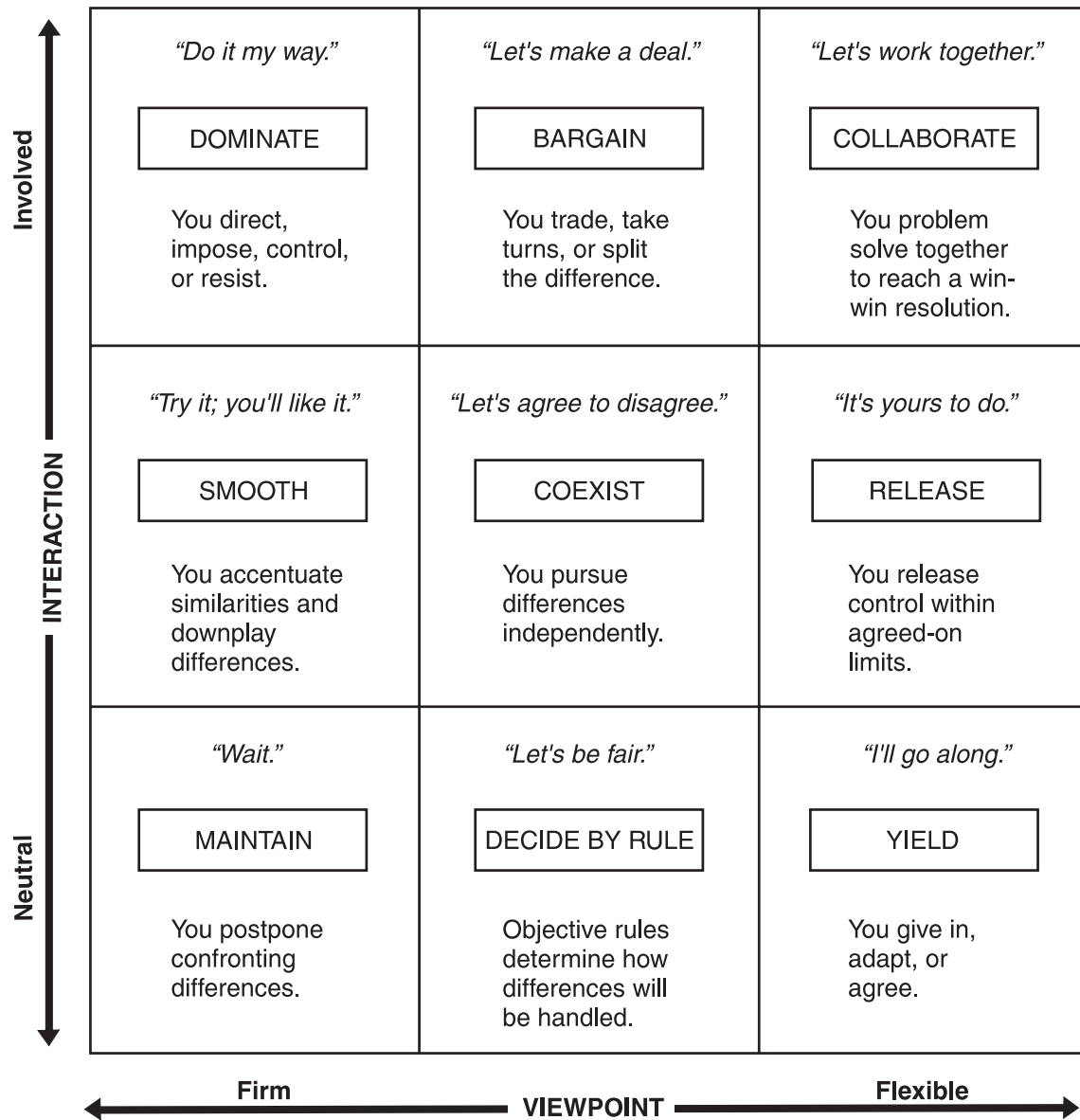


Figure 1. Nine Strategies for Managing Conflict and Disagreement Constructively¹

Principles for Managing Conflict and Disagreement Constructively

1. *Maintain mutual respect.* Ask yourself, "How can I discuss our differences in ways that allow the other person to retain his or her dignity? How can I avoid having the other person feel denigrated or 'put down'?"

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2. *Seek common ground.* Explore your overarching goals, values, and shared purpose. Try to see things through the other person's eyes
3. Deal with disagreement after choosing an appropriate level of *flexibility and involvement*. The more you can learn from the other person, the more you can gain from a flexible stance. The more a good working relationship is desired, the more personal should be your interaction. (e.g., his or her culture, race, gender, age, or life experiences). Don't lock yourself into adversarial or polarized positions.

Strategies for Managing Conflict and Disagreement Constructively

Conflict and disagreement can be handled most effectively by employing a wide range of approaches. In a research study to understand actual behavior (Kindler, 1983), people were asked the following: "When your views on a work-related issue differ from the views of others who are also importantly involved, how do you prepare for such situations?" From the responses, two behaviors emerged as themes:

- Deciding how firm or flexible to be when asserting one's viewpoint, and
- Choosing how intensely involved to be with others who hold divergent views.

After these two dimensions—viewpoint flexibility and interaction intensity—were identified, a study of the literature on conflict revealed the following nine strategies, which are depicted in Figure 1.

Dominate. Using power and pressure when speed or confidentiality are important or when the situation is too minor to warrant time-consuming involvement of others. Also for self-protection against people who would use their power abusively.

Smooth. Gaining acceptance of one's views by accentuating the benefits and smoothing over disadvantages that would fuel opposition.

Maintain. Holding onto the status quo by deferring action on views that differ from one's own. Useful as an interim strategy when time is needed to collect information or to let emotions cool down.

Bargain. Offering something the other party wants in exchange for something one wants. Expedient when time pressures preclude collaboration. A mediator may facilitate this strategy.

Coexist. Determining jointly to follow separate paths for an agreed-on period of time. Use when both parties are firm, and pilot testing will determine which path has greater merit.

Decide by Rule. Agreeing jointly to use an objective rule such as a vote, lottery, seniority system, or arbitration. Helpful when one wants to be seen as impartial but decisive action is needed.

Collaborate. Joint exploration to develop a creative solution that satisfies the important concerns of all parties. Useful when the issues are too important to be compromised, or when commitment is vital to successful implementation of the solution.

Release. Let go when the issue doesn't warrant your time or energy, or when you want others to resolve a non-critical issue to foster their initiative and provide a learning opportunity.

Yield. Support the other person's views when you become convinced it is more appropriate, or when the issue is much more important to them than to you.

It is a good idea to avoid overusing one or two habitual approaches. Rather, one should consciously choose the strategy—or blend of strategies—appropriate to the situation.

Process for Managing Conflict and Disagreement Constructively

As important as guiding principles are, and as helpful as a repertoire of strategies can be, a systematic process for dealing with conflict and disagreement is vital to producing desirable outcomes. The process consists of the following four steps:

Diagnosis. Monitoring where differences simmer in order to be able to handle the situation before it boils over into overt conflict. Potential sources of conflict are:

- Information is interpreted differently.
- Goals appear to be incompatible.
- Boundaries are violated.
- Old wounds have not healed.
- Symptoms are confused with underlying causes.

Planning. Developing a strategy and action plan.

- Choose one of the nine available strategies or a blend of strategies, congruent with the situation, along with a backup plan.
- Mutually agree with the other party on a time and place to explore differences and a time frame in which to do it.
- Decide how to monitor the process and what the consequences will be of failure to live up to any agreement.

Implementation. Carry out the plan.

- Maintain a tone of mutual respect and goodwill.
- Consider putting any agreement in writing.

Follow-up. After agreement has been reached:

- Monitor results to verify that the agreement is being honored.
- If the agreement is not being honored, learn why and then take corrective action.
- Reinforce behavior that supports the agreement.
- Learn from each experience with conflict and disagreement.

USES OF THE CONCEPTS

Organizational change—whether a program of continuous improvement, total quality management, process reengineering, empowerment, or simply a change in a bookkeeping system—creates personal vulnerability. Change threatens existing competence, control, status, and privilege. Therefore, it is not unusual for people to have different views of a proposed change or of how to implement changes. One key to implementing change successfully is dealing constructively with people who hold different views. Therefore, the concepts presented here are of value to both organizational consultants and managers.

When consultants and trainers introduce the nine-strategies model to clients and seminar participants in a conflict-management context, their presentations are more relevant. As trainees practice using the principles, strategies, and process for managing conflict and disagreement constructively, results will manifest as better teamwork, improved communication, and more creative solutions.

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■ SEVEN PURE STRATEGIES OF CHANGE

Kurt E. Olmosk

It seems increasingly clear that various individuals and groups approach the problem of change in various ways. There tends, however, to be a certain amount of consistency in the strategies employed within one group or by one individual over time.

This paper is an attempt to describe the various approaches I see being used most often. It is by no means an all-inclusive list of strategies currently in use or theoretically possible. It is an attempt, however, to describe some of the more prevalent strategies in some detail.

I first began thinking about the various strategies used to bring about change, while working with a group in Kansas City. This particular group described their purpose as an attempt to increase contact between blacks and whites and to increase awareness of the racial problems facing the city and country. This was to be done through reading, study, and discussion in an atmosphere that would encourage frank and open examination of feelings and prejudices as well as facts. As I worked with this group, it became clear that they were following a strategy similar to that used by many churches and other volunteer organizations. I call this approach the Fellowship Strategy.

This strategy, and seven others, are described on the following pages. They are summarized in the table at the end of this article. The order in which they are presented is not meant to signify either their relative importance or frequency of use.

FELLOWSHIP STRATEGY

Simply stated, the assumption underlying this model seems to be, "If we have good, warm interpersonal relations, all other problems will be minor." Great emphasis is placed on getting to know and like each other. For this reason, it is not unusual for groups using this model to sponsor discussion groups, group dinners, card parties, and other social events that will bring everyone together.

This strategy places strong emphasis on treating everyone equally. This is often interpreted as needing to treat everyone the same way. Everyone must be accepted into membership, no one is turned away. When questions of choice or decision-making must be faced, everyone is allowed to have his say and all opinions are to be weighed equally. No fact, feeling, opinion, or theory is to be considered inherently superior to any other. Arguments are few and confusing since conflict is generally suppressed and avoided.

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Groups that tend to use this strategy also tend to be composed of individuals who have emotional needs for warmth, love, and trust in their fellow human beings. Much of this strategy is geared to satisfying these needs. Most of the discussions, dinners, and parties are light and pleasant with a minimum of conflict. They are designed to foster feelings of warmth and goodwill among the participants.

Groups that use this approach are fairly successful in gaining members initially and often they are able to mobilize a great deal of initial energy. They give people something to belong to. For many people, this is extremely valuable and may sustain a group for some time even though its goals are unclear and its concrete accomplishments are few. In fact, this initial mobilization of energy and commitment is what the fellowship strategy seems to do best.

However, groups that employ the Fellowship approach as a primary strategy tend to face some chronic problems. Because much of the initial commitment is to individuals, rather than to ideas or projects, the group often begins to feel directionless. It has trouble stating what it is really trying to do. With the added strong emphasis on warm feelings and treating everyone equally, it often becomes virtually impossible to set priorities. There is bound to be someone who does not entirely agree with any decision that is made. And, because everyone must be heard and no one must be unhappy, one person can immobilize the whole group.

For these same reasons, the group often has trouble implementing any decisions it is able to make. The trouble may take several forms. Being unable to face conflict, the group often makes unrealistic plans. Because the emphasis is primarily on keeping everyone happy, questions of economics, politics, or engineering feasibility are often minimized. An example of this is the fact that many churches have difficulty remaining financially solvent. Yet unless this is done, plans may have to be changed or the church dissolved.

As plans are ignored or changed, it becomes increasingly difficult for groups using this strategy to maintain the commitment of their members. The feeling begins to grow that the group is floundering, that it isn't doing anything, and that it is a waste of time. At this point, old members begin to leave and the group can only survive by finding new members who need to belong to something.

As I have implied above, groups using this strategy tend to suppress certain questions from their members. These are questions of individual competence and of individual difference that would threaten the norm that all people are equal and that they should all be treated in the same way. They also suppress the question, "What's in it for me?" This last question is often interpreted as "You don't trust us (the group)." If the group cannot find a way to face these questions, it is usually short lived.

In my experience, the Fellowship strategy is most often used by churches and other voluntary groups that have few financial or physical resources with which to reward or punish behavior of members.

POLITICAL STRATEGY

The assumption underlying this approach can be stated as follows, “If all the ‘really’ influential people agree that something should be done, it will be done.” Emphasis is placed on finding and understanding the power structure that must be dealt with. This power structure usually includes not only the formal, recognized leaders, but the informal unofficial leaders as well. Much of the work done using this strategy is done informally on the basis of one-to-one relationships among these leaders.

This strategy emphasizes the identification and influencing of those individuals who seem to be most able to make decisions and have them carried out. It generally focuses on those people who are the most respected and have the largest constituency in a given area. Within this strategy, influence is based on the level and breadth of one’s perceived power and on one’s ability to bargain or work with other influential people to achieve goals valued by one’s constituency.

The groups that use the political approach as a primary strategy seldom believe that all people are really equal or the same. They often view individual differences as unimportant unless these differences relate directly to power. The primary emotional needs of these groups seems to be for control and attention. Much of the effort expended in these groups goes toward seeing that decisions that are made are favorable to them, and that people know they were influential in making the decision.

Groups that use this approach are often fairly good at getting decisions implemented once they are made. Because so much energy is expended on getting influential people involved initially, once a decision is made it is often simply a matter of carrying it out. This mobilization of power and the implementation of decisions is the area in which this approach seems to work best.

However, over time, groups that rely primarily on the political strategy face a variety of chronic problems. Since influence is defined as being able to get decisions made that are beneficial to one’s self and one’s constituency, a few adverse decisions may severely limit one’s influence and completely change the power structure. It is often a fairly unstable system with a continual shifting of positions.

This shifting of positions leads to another and related problem, that of maintaining credibility. With the constant bargaining and compromising that this approach requires, it is often difficult to remain consistent in one’s actions and to fulfill all of the promises made to one’s constituency. Over time this can lead to a loss of faith by one’s constituency and a corresponding loss of power and influence for the leader.

Finally, this approach often leads to backlash by the wider public and by individuals with opposing constituencies. Any decision is bound to be unpopular with some people and if enough decisions are made that they don’t like they may organize their own power group to counter those making unpopular decisions.

People using this strategy often have trouble dealing with questions concerning value systems and loyalty. When compromise is called for, it is often hard to draw the line between decisions that are within the bounds of acceptability to one’s own value

system and to one's constituency, and decisions that are the result of short-term pressures.

ECONOMIC STRATEGY

The underlying assumption for this approach is "If we have enough money or material wealth, we can buy anything or any change we want." The emphasis in this approach is on acquiring, or at least having influence over, all forms of material goods. These might include money, land, stocks, bonds, or any other tradeable commodity. This strategy is widely used in the United States and the Western World.

Inclusion into a group using this approach is usually based upon possession or control of marketable resources. Influence within the group is based on perceived wealth. The more money you have, the more people are willing to listen to you.

Most of the decisions made by the group are heavily, if not completely, influenced by questions of profitability as measured by an increase in tangible assets. The approach is highly rational and all people are assumed to behave more or less rationally from economic motives. Groups using this strategy often evidence strong emotional needs for control and rationality in all of their dealings.

The economic strategy works well in the United States. With the Puritan ethic still strongly held by many people, material wealth is not only a means of making life more comfortable, but is also a positive sign of talent and being one of the chosen. As long as the money holds out, this strategy is usually able to get decisions implemented once they are made.

This strategy does have some drawbacks, however. As Herzberg (1966) pointed out, money and material rewards are only temporary satisfiers. When people have been paid to make changes, they are satisfied for a while, but sooner or later they want more rewards. In order to maintain a change, it may be necessary to keep paying for it indefinitely.

This is related to a second problem in using this strategy. Few individuals or groups have unlimited resources. Some things or changes may simply be too expensive to buy given the resources available. There is often no way to significantly increase the available resources in the short run.

As with all other strategies, this one suppresses certain questions in its pure form. The most significant of these is "Is the practice ethical?" Since this is a somewhat emotional and philosophical question, it can not be answered within a strictly logical economic framework. This strategy also suppresses or ignores all questions that cannot be answered in terms of profit or loss. These include most questions dealing with feelings of people.

As might be guessed, this strategy is most often used by corporations or the very rich. It is, however, beginning to be used by other groups such as the poor in Operation Breadbasket.

ACADEMIC STRATEGY

The academic strategy makes the assumption that “People are rational. If you present enough facts to enough people, people will make the changes required.” To this end, individuals and groups adopting this strategy undertake an unending series of studies and produce thousands of pages of written reports each year.

Membership in groups using this strategy is based primarily on the possession of knowledge in a given area, or the desire to acquire such knowledge. Leadership and influence within the group is generally dependent upon the degree to which the individual is perceived to possess specialized knowledge, i.e., the degree to which he or she is seen as being an expert. The newcomer to the field is generally considered to have little to contribute to the group while the person with a Ph.D. or many years of specialized study is listened to closely.

People using this strategy tend to approach most problems, and the world in general, in a detached, analytical way. Their primary emotional needs appear to be for rationality and autonomy. People using this approach as a primary strategy often pride themselves on being disinterested observers or researchers of the world around them.

This approach is very useful in some cases. It often produces much relevant information and makes it available to people considering change. It may point out opportunities or consequences of action that would not be considered otherwise. It may also point out the cause of problems so that they may be corrected.

The academic strategy does not, however, have a very good record when it comes to actually bringing about change. There are several reasons for this. Because this approach emphasizes detached and disinterested study, it is often difficult to get people interested in the findings later. Only the researcher has been involved in the study during most of the time prior to publication so only he or she feels committed to the findings. The time and effort required to read and digest a complex report just does not seem worth it to most people. Without reading the complete report most people have trouble interpreting or believing the results of the study.

The emphasis on being a disinterested observer also makes it very difficult for the researcher to mobilize the energy and resources to implement the findings. For many academically oriented people, the emphasis on being a disinterested observer makes it hard to take an advocacy position on almost anything. Therefore, unless someone else becomes interested in the results of a study, no action will be taken on the findings.

There is one further problem with using the academic strategy to solve most problems: It is time consuming. It takes time to do studies and to write reports. Unless the problem being studied is fairly stable, the situation that faces the decision maker when the report is finished, may not be the same one that existed when the study began. This is sometimes the excuse given for not implementing findings, occasionally with justification.

The emphasis on rationality and being a disinterested observer that this strategy requires, makes it very difficult for people using it to answer several questions. One of

the most prominent of these is “How should the results be used?” Most academically oriented individuals feel this question is up to other people to answer.

A second but related question that often goes unanswered by the researcher is, “How do I feel about the results?” The emphasis on rationality blocks direct examination of this question.

My experience would indicate that this strategy is likely to be used by people in some positions more often than by people in others. This approach to change is often used by people who are outside the system they hope to effect. For instance, this approach is particularly popular with many consultants and people in staff positions (as opposed to line positions).

ENGINEERING STRATEGY

This strategy is particularly interesting because it tries to bring about change in individual behavior without dealing with people directly. The apparent underlying assumption can be stated as “If the environment or surroundings change enough, people will have to change also.” For this reason, much time may be spent studying the work situation, the classroom, or the ghetto street from the standpoint of physical layout, required or permitted interaction patterns, and role descriptions.

Groups that approach change in this way often recruit their members on the basis of the technical skills the individual possesses. The group may look for a systems analyst, an engineer, or a management specialist in order to grow. Group needs are often defined in terms of technical skills and these are considered more important than interpersonal style.

Within the group, influence is based on the perceived level of the particular technical skills required at the time. Outside the group, however, influence is exerted primarily by changing the structure or the environment of given tasks or individuals. For example, the assembly line may be speeded up in order to get workers to produce more. Or, departments may be reorganized and tasks redefined in order to break up troublesome cliques.

Basic to this strategy is the need for rationality. The emotional side of human beings gets in the way and is suppressed whenever possible. Within this focus on rationality, there is a strong emphasis on task relevance. Data and decisions are evaluated primarily on the basis of these criteria. If the information or decision does not help to get the task done, it is irrelevant.

Because of its strong emphasis on being aware of the structural aspects of problems, this approach often leads to considerable awareness of the environment in which a group works. This may be particularly helpful in highly unstable situations, because new developments and information are discovered quickly. Because many management problems are problems of information flow, this approach may also produce results when reorganization and redefinition of tasks results in new and shorter communication links.

Although this strategy does get results in some situations, it also runs into some typical problems. Management literature is full of studies and articles concerning ways to get people to accept change. Because people are often treated like objects or machines when problems are being analyzed, they are often resistant to changes this approach would indicate as desirable. The people most directly effected often do not feel committed to the change or do not understand it. Since people are assumed to be totally rational, their feelings are being ignored, and thus can not be talked about.

There are several other problems which are often encountered by groups using this strategy. First, it is often time consuming. While changes in the surrounding world may be detected quickly, analysis and decisions based on these changes take time to implement. Second, structural or environmental changes often produce unexpected results. A department that is reorganized in order to break up troublesome cliques may also lose the close working relationships that made it reasonably efficient. Third, in most organizations, there are very few people who have a broad enough perspective and enough power and influence to bring about widespread structural change. For this reason, this strategy is most often used by fairly high-level management in an organization.

The question most often ignored or suppressed by groups using this strategy is “How will people feel about the change?” Because of the emphasis on rationality and efficiency that is inherent in this strategy, this question is usually considered to be of little importance.

MILITARY STRATEGY

This approach to change is based on the use of physical force to change behavior. The name Military has been given this approach because it seemed to convey the right connotation to most people, not because the military is the sole user of this approach. In various forms, this approach is also used by many police departments, “revolutionary” student groups, and some teachers.

The basic assumption behind this approach can be stated as “People react to real threats. If we possess enough physical force, we can make people do anything.” To this end, considerable time is spent in learning to use weapons and to fight. Priorities may also be given to physical conditioning, strength, and agility.

Membership in groups using this approach is often determined on the basis of the possession of physical power, and willingness to submit to discipline. Both within the group, and in its dealings with the surrounding world, influence is exerted primarily through the fear of authority and the threat of punishment. Even though the iron fist is hidden in a velvet glove, there is never any doubt that the iron fist exists and can be used.

Much of the perceptual approach used by groups using this strategy is determined by the emotional needs of the members for control, status, and security. Out of these

needs often grows a tendency to see most problems and relationships in terms of power, authority, threat, and exploitation.

One of the main strengths of this approach is that it is often good at keeping order. If the threats are severe enough, most people are reluctant to misbehave and will try to find ways of getting what they want within the existing system.

One of the most severe handicaps of this approach is that once resorted to, the “enforcer” can never relax. As soon as he does, the change that is being imposed will disappear.

A second problem is that force is often met with force. Resorting to the use of force often starts an ever escalating cycle of violence. People resist having change imposed on them and whenever possible will rebel.

When this approach is used, many moral questions tend to be ignored by most of the group. The average member seldom asks who should “really” make decisions. He “knows” that the answer is “Those in authority.” Questions of right and wrong are also difficult to face since in a very real sense “Might makes right” within this approach.

CONFRONTATION STRATEGY

This approach to change is based on the assumption that if you can mobilize enough anger in enough people and force them to look at the problems around them the required changes will be made. From this basic assumption, it is clear that this strategy is a high-conflict strategy. However, as it is being thought of here, the strategy stresses nonviolent argument as opposed to the actual use of physical force.

Membership in groups using this approach to change is often based on one’s ability to deal with and use conflict in ways that further the goals of the group. Influence both within and outside the group is based primarily on one’s ability to argue one’s point and to deal with conflict short of coming to blows. Most of the early civil rights groups and student groups made heavy use of this approach to bring about change.

As I think of the groups that use this approach, it appears that they base much of their argument on a very narrow definition of the “Truth.” Much of their perceptual approach is in terms of highly idealized moral arguments. Out of this idealized morality often come strong emotional needs to express one’s anger, sense of indignation, and sense of self. It is out of these needs that the confrontation with other “offending” groups is generated.

This approach to change has several strengths. When a group adopts this approach it is usually fairly clear to the “opponents” that they will need to make some kind of answer before the confronting group will go away. To this extent, this approach often does get people to look at problems they would rather not acknowledge. Secondly, and sometimes more importantly, this approach gains attention and publicity in the larger community. It is very hard to ignore a thousand people marching down Main Street. If the cause for which these people are marching catches on, the increased pressure on the

decision makers to do something may bring about changes where all other approaches have failed.

This approach to change also has several major drawbacks. While it often does gain attention and point out problems, this approach, when used exclusively, often fails to suggest solutions. Because many of the people using this approach have little power to make changes themselves, and because people join the protest movements for such a wide variety of reasons, it is often difficult to get any agreement on alternatives or solutions to the problems.

Secondly, because this approach is based on the use of conflict, it often polarizes people and creates considerable backlash. When students stage a sit-in in the dean's office, he often becomes determined not to give in to this type of pressure. If this is the second or third group of students who has tried to use this strategy, he may feel he has no choice but to call in the police. When this happens, even students with legitimate complaints may have trouble getting a hearing.

As the confrontation approach to change escalates, one question tends to get suppressed. "Is there anything in the opponent's argument that is worthwhile?" To suggest that the opponents might be right about some things is often close to heresy and the person who makes that kind of suggestion is often treated accordingly.

This approach to change has most often been used by students and the poor. These groups often feel that they have no other way to make themselves heard.

APPLIED BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE MODEL

In recent years many people have been increasingly vocal in their assertion that most problems are extremely complex. This is the basic assumption in the Applied Behavioral Science Model. Simply stated, this assumption is "Most problems are complex and overdetermined. A combination of approaches is usually required to achieve a solution."

Groups using this approach usually argue that inclusion into membership should be based on the effect the issues under consideration will have on people. As many people as possible, who will be affected by the decision, should be included in making the decision. Within the group, influence is based on knowledge and the degree to which the decision will affect the individual. Ideally, the individual with the most knowledge about a given problem and/or the person most affected by the decision should have the most influence in the group when the decision is being considered. Given this outlook, it also follows that leadership of the group should change as the problem being considered changes.

The perceptual approach to the world by groups using this approach is often very eclectic. Any information or theory that will help to understand the situation and reach a decision is used. In its purest form, the emotional needs of members seem to be primarily for emotional and intellectual integration. Attempts are made to keep from fragmenting one's life and approach to problems.

This broad-based approach to problems, along with a situation-centered focus, is the major strength of this model. Very often more information is considered and utilized in reaching decisions by groups employing this approach, than by groups using most of the other approaches.

This approach does have some drawbacks, however. One of the biggest is simply making itself understood. Because it is so eclectic and situation centered, people using it often have difficulty answering what appear to be simple questions. When considering the question of how to motivate workers, for instance, the work situation, task requirements, social needs of workers, value systems of everyone involved, work precedents and many other factors need to be looked at. Any answer that considers all these factors is likely to be long, complex, and somewhat confusing.

Second, because each situation is somewhat different than every other, people using this approach may appear to be somewhat inconsistent. A slight change in one of the variables under consideration, may change the recommended solution completely. To the outsider, it may appear that the question is the same but only the answer has changed.

The question that is most often suppressed or ignored by people using this approach is “How should I ‘really’ do it?” This question just cannot be answered within this approach because the assumption is made that there is no one best way to solve any problem.

SUMMARY

In the preceding pages, I have tried to describe several of the strategies I have seen used most often by groups and individuals to bring about change. I have described each of these as a pure strategy. In practice, these are seldom used as pure approaches. Rather, one strategy may predominate with modifications based on one or two of the other approaches.

My main purpose here has been to describe each strategy in as much detail as possible with the hope that if people can recognize the strategy being used, and the underlying assumptions, approaches that are appropriate to the situation can be chosen.

All of the strategies described in the preceding pages are summarized in the following table.

	FELLOWSHIP	POLITICAL
Basic Assumption	If we have good warm interpersonal relations, all other problems will be minor.	If all the really influential people agree to do something, it will be done.
Inclusion	Get everybody in.	Get everyone in who possesses power.
Influence	Everybody equal.	Based on level and breadth of perceived power.
Perceptual Approach	Accepts all. Shuts out none.	Stereotype. Ignore individual differences unless they relate to power.
Emotional Needs	Warmth, love, and trust.	Control and attention.
Good at	Mobilizing initial energy.	Mobilizing power. Implementing decisions once made.
Chronic Problems	Financial support. Actual implementation of decisions. Maintaining long-run commitment.	Maintaining credibility. Fighting backlash.
Questions Suppressed	What's in it for me? Competence. Individual difference.	Is my action consistent with my value system?
Most Often Used by	Churches. Volunteer organizations. Groups with limited power.	Those already in power.

	ECONOMIC	ACADEMIC
Basic Assumption	If we have enough money or material wealth, we can buy anything or any change we want.	People are rational. If you present enough facts to people, they will change.
Inclusion	Based on possession of marketable resources.	Based on possession of knowledge and expertise.
Influence	Based on perceived wealth.	Based on specialized knowledge and facts.
Perceptual Approach	Materialistic.	Analytical and detached.
Emotional Needs	Control and rationality.	Autonomy and rationality.
Good at	Implementing decisions once made.	Finding causes. Presenting relevant information.
Chronic Problems	Maintaining change and/or satisfaction. Few people or groups have unlimited resources.	Implementing findings. Mobilizing energy. Getting people to pay attention or read reports. Time consuming.
Questions Suppressed	Is it ethical? Most feelings.	How do I feel about results? How should results be used.
Most Often Used by	Corporations. The very wealthy.	Outsiders. People in staff positions.

	ENGINEERING	CONFRONTATION
Basic Assumption	If the environment or surroundings change, people have to change.	If we can mobilize enough anger and force people to look at problems around us, the required changes will be made.
Inclusion	Based on possession of technical skills.	Based on the ability to deal with and use conflict.
Influence	By changing structure or task environment.	By nonviolent argument.
Perceptual Approach	Task relevance and rationality.	Narrow belief in "Truth."
Emotional Needs	Rationality, clarity, and structure.	Expression of anger. Expression of self.
Good at	Being aware of surrounding and/or environment.	Forcing people to look at issues they may not want to acknowledge. Gaining attention and publicity.
Chronic Problems	Gaining acceptance for change. Dealing with unexpected consequences. Time consuming. Few people can control structure.	Finding alternatives. Dealing with backlash.
Questions Suppressed	How will people feel about it?	Is anything in opponent's argument worthwhile?
Most Often Used by	Top management.	Revolutionary students. The poor. Unions.

	MILITARY	APPLIED BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE
Basic Assumption	If we possess enough physical force, we can make people do anything.	Most problems are complex and overdetermined. A combination of approaches is usually required.
Inclusion	Based on possession of physical power.	Based on including as many of those affected as possible.
Influence	By fear of authority and threat of punishment.	Based on knowledge and the degree to which the decisions will affect them.
Perceptual Approach	Exploit for use of power structure.	Eclectic but situation centered.
Emotional Needs	Control, status and security.	Emotional and intellectual integration.
Good at	Keeping order.	Using as much information as possible.
Chronic Problems	Rebellion. Can never relax.	Making itself understood. Not appearing "wishy-washy."
Questions Suppressed	Who should "really" make decisions? Is it right?	How should I "really" do it? Do you really know what you are doing?
Most Often Used by	Military. Police. "Weathermen."	Human relations consultants, organization development consultants.

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■ MODELS AND ROLES OF CHANGE AGENTS

Marshall Sashkin

Models for inducing change within an organization may have different orientations. Some that are concerned with producing specific change might be labeled *adoptive* models. Others oriented toward producing “changingness,” a general state conducive to change, may be called *adaptive* models.

The differences between them boil down to these: Is the aim to get the client to change in certain specified ways, to adopt certain new practices, to use certain new technological devices? If so, an adoptive model is appropriate.

Is the aim to help the client become more adaptable, more open to change, and able to change in needed ways (whatever the specifics as defined by the client might be)? To accomplish this aim, the client uses internal and external resources for change, rather than relying on outside help. An adaptive model is appropriate.

ADOPTIVE MODELS

Three major approaches center on the diffusion and adoption of technological and social inventions or changes. All three are oriented toward researchers developing knowledge that could be beneficial once put into practice. Thus, the question raised by all three approaches is: “Researchers have developed some new device, mechanism, process, or procedure. How can potential users be convinced to put it into practice?”

Research, Development, and Diffusion (RDD)

The first and oldest model is generally called Research, Development, and Diffusion. RDD is devoted to making sure that the person who builds a “better mouse trap” beats a path to the doors of the world. (We now know that, in reality, the world rarely beats a path to the inventor’s door, even when the invention not only works but works better.)

Basic to RDD is production of an innovation or invention through institutional research by a corps of trained research scientists. The innovation is tested and developed by a lengthy process. Then, the innovation is ready for “diffusion” to users. Adoption occurs when diffusion is effectively carried out. This means that the innovation must be presented to potential users appropriately, at the right time, and by the “correct” type of communication. Careful study of the user population is necessary to determine these factors.

Originally published in *The 1974 Annual Handbook for Group Facilitators* by J. William Pfeiffer and John E. Jones (Eds.), San Diego, CA: Pfeiffer & Company. In part, this paper summarizes concepts more fully developed by M. Sashkin, W. C. Morris, and L. Horst (1973).

RDD is technologically oriented and concerned primarily, though not exclusively, with how to get individuals, groups, and organizations to adopt and use such innovations as auto seat belts, new breakfast foods, or an improved assembly method for welded machinery. RDD can also be applied to adoption of social-behavioral innovations, such as management practices or educational methods. But such application is not common. Effective use of RDD depends essentially on sophisticated marketing methods. However, the evidence we have on the use and results of RDD indicates that the model does not seem to be very effective, generally.

Social Interaction and Diffusion (SID)

Social Interaction and Diffusion is concerned with behavior change to a greater degree than is RDD. But it does retain emphasis on adoption of technological innovations, such as acceptance of new drugs by physicians. The primary orientation, however, is the same as that of RDD: how people can be persuaded to adopt and use an innovation. The SID model is based on the large body of evidence that certain “opinion leaders” set trends and others follow. The followers adopt innovations after contact with opinion leaders who have already accepted the innovations and recommend that others do so as well.

The change strategy is to identify opinion leaders and to direct specific information, education, demonstration, and persuasion efforts toward them, rather than toward followers (the “general public”).

Various problems arise, however. There are no “general” opinion leaders. For each innovation specific leaders must be identified. “Fashion” opinion leaders, for example, are not the same people as “voting” opinion leaders. Furthermore, identification is not always easy. Sometimes opinion leaders are unaware of their social role or, more frequently, they do not want to be identified.

Another problem is that this leader-identification approach is individually oriented. It does not use the great norm-setting power of organized groups, formal and informal. Thus, in dealing with an organization like a YMCA, an auto assembly plant, or a local service club, the SID model may be quite inefficient compared to other approaches—even if it does produce some results.

Linkage

This third, more sophisticated model focuses much more on the process of adoption. Linkage, developed by Havelock (1968), basically is concerned with the roles of the disseminator who links the research source with the user(s) of innovations. The “linker” may not be a person but a procedure or a group of people. The Linkage model considers it significant that the user (client-system) learn how to obtain and use information *externally* (where and how to ask so that the external resource can understand, etc.) and *internally* (how to draw on knowledge resources within). Still, the model places primary emphasis on the adoption of specific innovations rather than on the adoptive *capacity* of the user.

Although Linkage is not limited to either “hard” or “soft” technological innovation, it does not seem to place sufficient emphasis on adaptivity.

ADAPTIVE MODELS

Adaptivity is the focus of any model concerned with producing long-range, survival-facilitating change. Three such models will be examined here. All three adaptive models are oriented toward development of adaptive capacity in a client system—the ability to become aware of needs for change and to plan, implement, and evaluate action changes. All stress client participation in specific change efforts. The client learns to use the change model by applying it to specific real problems, with the help of an external change agent. Also, all three models are based, to differing degrees, on an approach developed by Kurt Lewin called “action-research.”

Intervention Theory and Method (ITM)

Intervention Theory and Method is a model described by Chris Argyris (1970). It differs from the other two adaptive models in many minor ways and in two major ways.

First, this model is oriented exclusively toward changes in internal processes. The interventionist is relatively unconcerned with technological or structural change and does not help the client go outside of the system for change resources (information, expert help, and such), with the possible exception of calling in another change agent who possesses certain specialized process skills.

Second, there is less emphasis, in practice, on the generation of research knowledge relevant to the change process. Although there is considerable emphasis on collecting and analyzing data within the client system and on monitoring effects of actions, the aim is to provide the client with skills for accomplishing activities that create effective, adaptive internal changes. In practice, if not in theory, there is no aim to generate experimental knowledge on the process of change or to build better behavioral science theories about the change process. This, of course, fits with the first emphasis on the internal processes of the client system.

Planned Change (PC)

This second model is by Lippitt, Watson, and Westley (1958).

PC differs substantially from ITM in two ways: First, change resources outside of the client system, as well as within, receive attention. Furthermore, the model is not oriented solely toward process change, although this type of change does receive most of the focus.

Second, more specific attention goes to evaluating action changes. The PC model concentrates more than the ITM model on measuring effects to support effective change and further planning. However, as in the case of the ITM model, the generation of behavioral science knowledge on the change process is not emphasized in practice.

Action-Research (AR)

Not only does the AR model combine the attributes of ITM and PC, it also adds the emphasis lacking in these two—the generation of new, useful knowledge about the process of change, about specific change methods or techniques, about specific changes (of a technical, structural, or process nature), or about the resolution or means of resolving certain social problems.

In other words, the AR model creates specific changes that develop client resources for self-change and future adaptability. These changes include client training in the research methods needed for data collection, in problem understanding, and in evaluation of change attempts. The results are increased behavioral science knowledge about change.

To accomplish this, the change agent fulfills three roles—those of consultant, trainer, and researcher. Following is a brief examination and comparison of these roles as they are employed (or omitted) in all six of the change models discussed.

CHANGE-AGENT ROLES

The change agent using each of the six models described here assumes different roles, as in the following examples:

- In RDD, the change agent is really a consultant, aimed at helping the client adopt and use certain innovations.
- In ITM, the interventionist is primarily a trainer, showing the client how to use the ITM approach to alter client system processes. Part of the role is training the client in certain research skills: data-gathering and analysis methods.
- The AR model includes consultant and trainer roles, plus that of researcher. The researcher's task is to generate new behavioral science knowledge, which can be used by other change agents as well as by academicians primarily involved in developing and refining theory and understanding.

Table 1 compares roles in all six models more specifically.

Table 1. Comparison of Six Change Models in Terms of the Roles of the Change Agent

ADOPTIVE CHANGE MODELS	ROLES		
	Consultant	Trainer	Researcher
RDD	Primary emphasis; the major function of the change agent is facilitating adoption of some specific innovation.	Not included; however, some training may take place, in the sense that the client may be taught how to obtain similar knowledge in the future.	Research may be accomplished but this is rare and is not part of the change process or necessary to it.

Table 1 (continued). Comparison of Six Change Models in Terms of the Roles of the Change Agent

ADOPTIVE CHANGE MODELS	ROLES		
	Consultant	Trainer	Researcher
SID	Primary emphasis; the major function of the change agent is facilitating adoption of some specific innovation or practice.	Not included; however, certain members of the client system may be made more aware of their roles as resources for new knowledge and other members may learn to seek them out and use them more effectively.	Research is not a primary focus and not part of the change process, although research done on this model has been used to “refine” it.
Linkage	Primary emphasis; the major function of the knowledge linker—the change agent—is effective diffusion of the specific innovation (technical or social) by creating linkages between the knowledge source and the user; such linkages may be made permanent through roles carried out by an individual linker or by a linking group or as institutionalized procedures.	Training may occur in that the client learns more effective methods for getting information from external resources; in addition, the client may learn better internal data retrieval procedures.	Research is not a focus, although considerable research has been done on the model and on the diffusion and utilization processes; however, the model itself does not contribute to such research as part of its normal operation.
ITM	Consultation on process only, not on content problems; however, the interventionist does introduce the client to new methods of data gathering, analysis, decision making.	Primary emphasis on training the client in new skills and methods (process oriented).	Emphasized to the extent of the training the client in research skills needed for generation of valid information prior to and during the change process; research for development of new behavioral science knowledge is emphasized conceptually, but does not seem an integral part of the model.

Table 1 (continued). Comparison of Six Change Models in Terms of the Roles of the Change Agent

ADOPTIVE CHANGE MODELS	ROLES		
	Consultant	Trainer	Researcher
PC	Consultation on process primarily, but also on content; for example, the derivation-utilization conference introduces the client to new content knowledge resources.	Major emphasis on training the client in skills and methods for creating adaptive changes.	Emphasized mostly in evaluation of the effects of specific changes and client training in certain research skills needed for data collection and diagnosis; the importance of the generation of new behavioral science is noted, but it is not an operational part of the model.
AR	Consultation on process is emphasized, but content consultation also occurs.	Major emphasis on training for development of internal resources for change.	Major emphasis on research as the basis for action, an important area of client training, and the source of new knowledge about change that can be used by behavioral science practitioners and theorists.

The three adoptive models focus on the consultant role of the change agent. Some training may occur with the SID model, and a limited type of training (in information-retrieval skills) is likely with Linkage. Although some research has been done on all three adoption models (especially SID and Linkage), research is not an integral part of their operation.

The three adaptive models emphasize consultation and training roles, although the nature of these roles differs somewhat. ITM includes consultation on process issues, not on specific content problems. PC and AR emphasize process consultation, but often include consultation around content problems.

All three adaptive approaches train the client in the use of the model to produce change. For ITM, this training is the primary emphasis; PC and AR are more balanced in focus. In the ITM model, research has a heavy conceptual emphasis but an apparently weak practical emphasis, except for client training in skills needed to generate valid information. PC goes somewhat further in noting the importance of research for evaluation of change, as well as data-gathering and diagnosis. AR is the only model with a basic part generating new behavioral science knowledge, as well as client training in research skills for data collection, diagnosis, and evaluation.

CONCLUSION

The difference between adoptive and adaptive change models in general is far more significant than differences among the three models of each type. This is particularly true for the adaptive models: Their differences are really minor and all three approaches are generally useful.

The three adoptive models, particularly SID and Linkage, are useful in certain circumstances, with Linkage being the most generally useful of the three. However, effective change is based primarily on the three adaptive models: Intervention Theory and Method, Planned Change, and Action-Research.

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■ MANAGING THE DYNAMICS OF CHANGE AND STABILITY

Anthony Broskowski, William L. Mermis, Jr., and Farrokh Khajavi

In the last several decades there has been great interest in the process of planned change and the role of individuals in creating change. An early theoretician of the change process, Kurt Lewin (1947), described it in three phases: unfreezing, changing, and refreezing. Since his early contributions, a large body of literature on the theory of planned change has developed, including strategies for overcoming resistance to change and for the process of creating change in a variety of organizations (Bennis, Benne, & Chin, 1969). This growing interest in the theory of planned change and resistance to change has been stimulated in part by the rapid and sometimes chaotic and uncontrolled changes in our society. Aptly described as “future shock” (Toffler, 1970), this increasing rate of change has developed directly from our society’s rapid growth in population, resources, and technology. Despite proliferating change, however, resistance still exists in areas in which many people feel change and growth should occur, thus increasing the current emphasis on the change process.

The Change Agent

The interest in the theory of planned change has created the new professional role of the “change agent”—the catalytic protagonist of the change process. The change agent’s job is to develop a climate for planned change by overcoming resistances and marshalling forces for positive growth. Such skills are needed in conditions of rapid change and turbulence, particularly in systems that do not respond appropriately to changing environmental forces.

Need for Stability

Because of the emphasis on promoting change and reducing resistance to change, less attention has been paid to the systemic need for stability, particularly after a successful change process. Lewin (1947) initially noted the tendency for group performance to slip back to original levels after a period of rapid change and considered stabilization efforts part of the change process. Klein (1967) also pointed out the value of the defender role in resisting change. Albanese (1970) commented on a system’s need to resist change and to maintain continuity and a steady state. These few references, however, fail to fully highlight stability as a central factor of the growth process. A more complete recognition

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is needed that all systems require a dynamic interplay between change and stability for successful growth.

PRINCIPLES OF POSITIVE GROWTH

Sufficient attention has not been given to Lewin's third-stage process of refreezing. Although, characteristically, dynamic systems do exhibit processes of rapid change and adaptation, based on inputs and feedback from their environments, uncontrolled growth and continual internal disturbance are also factors in such destructive processes as cancer.

Viable and adaptive growth processes generally occur in steps, or short phases, of change and growth followed by relatively longer periods of stability and consolidation. Any living organism, small group, organization, or higher-level system must undergo these periods of acute or rapid adaptation to maintain an equilibrium with its constantly changing environment. This step function process is even further complicated in more complex organizations, where, at any one point, various subsystems are in different phases of change and stability. Therefore, the growth process in complex systems must also include the mutual adaptation of internal subsystems.

The growth process can seldom be a continuously smooth function. For relatively long periods, the system must stabilize rapid change and allocate the major amount of its resources and energies to production rather than to internal change. If the system cannot produce a sufficient output, it cannot maintain an adequate level of exchange with its environment. The viable system also processes feedback concerning the quality of its production and, if necessary, reorganizes itself internally to modify its own production. While these internal reorganization changes may consume a major amount of the system's energy for a short period, the change process cannot go on indefinitely. Another period of high stability and high production must follow.

Boulding (1974) notes how little is actually known about the most general principles of growth, particularly the determination of a system's optimal size. Until a further understanding of growth and its limits is achieved, stability must be equally valued.

ORGANIZATIONS AS GENERAL SYSTEMS

Based on general systems theory (Bertalanffy, 1968; Katz & Kahn, 1966; Miller, 1955; Seiler, 1967), the conceptual model of organizations considered here views an organization as a complex system with permeable boundaries, residing within a larger environment that continually exerts pressures on its boundaries and with which it must interact. As an open system, an organization receives inputs across its boundaries, operates on these inputs within itself, and transfers outputs back into the environment. The organization must also process feedback in order to adapt. To achieve efficient

production, the organization is further divided into separate subsystems that must maintain a certain amount of integration with one another.

A systemic viewpoint emphasizes the importance of the organization's environment (Emery & Trist, 1965; Terreberry, 1968). This viewpoint assumes that the organizational system, as defined by its boundaries and internal structures, can be conceptualized as potentially stable, whereas the system's environment is assumed to be in a state of continual change. Adaptation is the cyclical process of reducing the gradually increasing discrepancy that arises between a stable structure and its changing environment. The step-function process of change and stabilization can be viewed as cyclical phases of these two processes: (1) relatively permeable boundaries and internal reorganization and (2) closed boundaries and an emphasis on high production. The same principle applies to the internal adaptation among subsystems.

AGENTS FOR CHANGE OR STABILITY

Agents emphasizing change and those concentrating on stability are not seen as mutually exclusive individuals or types of behavior. However, there are significant differences in the operational styles or in the relative behavioral emphases between these two approaches. In some cases, the functions of a change agent and an agent for stability will overlap. Furthermore, one person may have to shift back and forth between the behaviors characteristic of these two emphases. For example, when a major change needs to be initiated, change-agent behavior is called for. If successful, it will lead to a desired change in the circumstances and thus require, in turn, different behaviors or mechanisms to stabilize that change. The environment, however, will continue to change around this newly restabilized organization, creating the need at some later time for yet another major change. The need for change—and thus for the change agent—arises when a significant discrepancy occurs between the organization's output and the demands of the environment. When the discrepancy is minimal, the focus must shift to the function of stabilization.

FUNCTIONS OF THE "STAY" AGENT

Some of the organizational tasks of the stay-agent role must be viewed in a perspective relative to the tasks of a change agent. Furthermore, the tasks of an agent promoting stability may be different when the agent is working within a newly created organization and when he or she is working within an established organization that has recently undergone a major change.

Building and Maintaining Systemic Boundaries

The stay agent must assist in building and maintaining the boundaries of the system and the subsystems within it. Within new organizations, the stay agent tries to establish the identity and goals of the new system. The stay agent is concerned with issues of morale

and esprit de corps. Often the strategies for this task involve promoting a common cause or an ideal goal for the organization members. To encourage the members to identify with their new organization, the stay agent may develop membership standards, initiation rights, a name for the organization that may capture some of its goals, and a philosophy of the organization. The maintenance of a psychological boundary can also be aided by the construction of physical boundaries, such as office locations, and by the differentiation of the organization within a particular geographical territory or a larger constituency. The success of Saul Alinsky, a prominent community change agent, was partially due to his efforts in developing stay agents to maintain the newly created community organizations (Alinsky, 1946; Sanders, 1970).

Within an old organization, the functions of the stay agent include the maintenance of any reorganization. This function is vital for strategies of organizational renewal noted in many large and old bureaucracies. A newly appointed administrator, charged with the responsibility of bringing about vital and drastic changes in an old bureaucracy, is often initially successful in creating some reorganization only to have the system slowly return to its former state. Frequently in these cases, insufficient attention was given to the processes of maintenance and stabilization. Following a successful reorganization, the stay agent must refine procedures and make them routine so that the new patterns of behavior or methods of operation become normal (particularly for older employees who are used to particular methods of doing business).

Building Internal Networks Between Subsystems

In any new organization, or in any old one that has undergone reorganization, it is important that the new subsystems become linked and coordinated in a meaningful fashion (Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967). The stay agent is concerned with the integration of differentiated subsystems and encourages effective coordination and communication among them. At the same time, however, the stay agent should be aware of the tendency within organizations to develop rigid networks of communication. It might be said that it is the stay agent's job to build interdependency and cohesiveness within the group or organization, a process that often directly opposes strategies for overcoming resistance to planned change.

Collecting and Maintaining New Resources

Obtaining new resources is probably one of the most important tasks of a stay agent: recruiting new members, ensuring continued financial support, and generating community sanction or legitimacy for the organization. As a part of this general task, the stay agent must make sure that some of the organization's outputs or available resources are returned to the system for its own maintenance. For example, discretionary funds may be allocated for in-service training of the organization's staff.

While the stay agent is bringing new inputs through the system's boundaries, he or she must also filter out those elements that are too dissonant or disruptive for the organization at that particular moment. In this sense the stay agent functions as a

gatekeeper of the system's boundary. This function clearly illustrates the delicate balance between change and stability. Although one must maintain a certain amount of variety and diversification to keep the organization viable (Ashby, 1956), the dictates of stability require that the variety not exceed the system's ability to absorb and cope with the turbulent elements. Any system that recruits too much variety in its staff or in its informational inputs may become fragmented as it attempts to follow all these new or potential directions. This problem is traditional with all systems and is often solved by filtering new inputs.

In recruiting new resources for the organization, the stay agent must consider that the goal-setting function of the organization is a dynamic process. New community organizations are frequently designed by change agents so that the outputs or the goals of the system are tied to a rapidly diminishing market. Often when the primary goal or goals of the organization are achieved, there is little interest in maintaining the organization or in seeking new goals to legitimize its continuing existence. In many cases the organization may be planned to end at this point. Under other circumstances, however, new legitimate goals may be developed for the organization (Etzioni, 1964). In developing new goals for old organizations, the stay-agent function often overlaps with the change-agent function.

The stay agent should also be sensitive to the organization's need to exchange resources with other organizations in its environment. Building up such linkages ensures the survival and maintenance of the organization when new resources may be difficult to obtain. By providing a stable and continuous link to other systems in the environment, the stay agent becomes a distinct asset for the organization, assuring continuing reciprocal exchanges.

Ensuring Feedback on Output and Growth

An additional task for the stay agent is to ensure feedback relative to the quantity and quality of the organization's output. Although sensitive to the need for adaptation to changing environmental demands, the stay agent attempts to act as a brake against rapid or unnecessary changes. Similar to such mechanistic feedback systems as speed governors on engines and gyroscopes on ships, the stay agent seeks to prevent the organization from growing too fast or from changing itself by discarding features that may serve very critical adaptive functions.

To ensure controlled growth in a new organization, the stay agent may develop a low-risk strategy to avoid any large initial losses. Similar to the strategy of a gambler starting out with a small stake, the stay agent avoids investing a significant amount of the organization's resources in any goal where there is sufficient risk that the organization might lose its resources. For several reasons it is probably better in the initial stages of organization development to win several small victories than one large one. Winning a big victory immediately may establish unrealistic expectations among organization members and the organization's constituents. Members may expect continual large victories and may tend to leave the organization if the victories do not

occur. The subsequent failures and reduction in morale would make it difficult to recruit new members. Moving very rapidly may also make members feel a loss of participation and may erode their morale and support for the organization. Furthermore, rapidly expansive growth may stimulate early resistance from other systems that have a vested interest in seeing that the organization does not survive. Thus, while change agents may be disposed to move rapidly, the stay agent must gauge the pacing and patterning of growth and change.

IMPLICATIONS FOR CHANGE AGENTS

Just as a new organization can fall apart if it is not sufficiently organized or if it moves too quickly, so an old one may topple if it becomes so rigid that it is unable to maintain an acceptable rate of exchange with the environment. The stay agent in an established organization must insure that the internal operations are sufficiently flexible to absorb change when it is needed. At this point stay-agent functions blend into change-agent functions, and the stable phase of growth must give way to a relatively more abrupt and turbulent change phase.

Change agents, however, must fully recognize, as Lewin initially did, the necessity of stability as a basis for growth. Respect for structural mechanisms and roles that promote stability must be maintained, even while one is trying to alter radically the existing system.

Sarason (1972) has brilliantly described how new settings are being created at an accelerating rate and why so many of them are ending in dissolution. In his analysis, a critical variable is the leader's ability to stabilize and maintain the setting after the initially exuberant phase of new creation has subsided. Frequently, the change agent is found in this initial leadership role. It is here, however, that the change agent must begin using a stay-agent strategy. Again, it must be emphasized that it is not always necessary for different people to play these different roles, although individuals may be predisposed to one role or the other. Rather, it is suggested that change agents pay more attention to the value of stability and stay-agent functions.

As society and its institutions are likely to continue facing tremendous change and environmental turbulence, a growing awareness must be developed of the impact of uncontrolled growth and the need for the process of stabilization as well as that of change.

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■ BEHAVIORAL CLARITY IN CONSULTATION: THE TRIADIC MODEL AS INSTRUMENT

Gerard Egan

If change is to take place in an orderly, systematic fashion, it is important that those involved in the change process get as clear a picture as possible of what is to take place. “Visualizing change” (Lippitt, 1973) through simple (but not oversimplified) models can help all involved in the change process attain this clarity.

Presented here is an adaptation and amplification of Tharp and Wetzel’s (Tharp, 1975; Tharp & Wetzel, 1969) very useful “triadic” consultation model used as a simple, practical instrument to help clarify the logic of change.

According to the triadic model (Figure 1), the consultant works through a mediator (whether an individual person or a group of people) to help change the behavior of a specific target (again, an individual or a group). For instance, a school psychologist may help a teacher design a behavioral-intervention program for a student involved in self-defeating behaviors in the classroom (Figure 2).

The *target* is a single individual or a group with behavior to be modified. For example, the target might be a member of a family or the family itself, a supervisor or an entire work unit, a teacher or an entire faculty, etc.

The *mediator* is an individual or a group capable of influencing the behavior of the target. Tharp and Wetzel (1969) see the mediator as an individual or a group that has control over the target’s reinforcers and that can place these reinforcers on contingency. For instance, parents can tell their son that he may use the car in the evening provided that he finishes his homework and his household chores during the day. Or a supervisor might allow a worker freedom to choose his or her own work hours if certain production schedules are met and maintained. The parents and the supervisor control certain reinforcers and can place them on contingency.

The model presented here, however, takes a somewhat wider view of the mediator by seeing the mediator as having resources that help the target achieve desirable goals. For example, if the target wants to fix a car, a mediator can teach the target how to fix a car. The mediator in this case influences the target by training the target.

The *consultant* is a person or a group of people with the knowledge or skills or programs or vision or methodology that can help the mediator influence the target. For instance, a school psychologist might show a teacher how he or she might use behavioral contracts to influence the behavior of students. Or a consultant might train a

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group of people from an organization (mediators) to design a change program—from diagnosis through evaluation—for the entire organization (the target). In the triadic model, the consultant ordinarily does not deal directly with the target, though he or she might observe how the mediator interacts with the target in order to help the mediator interact more productively with the target.

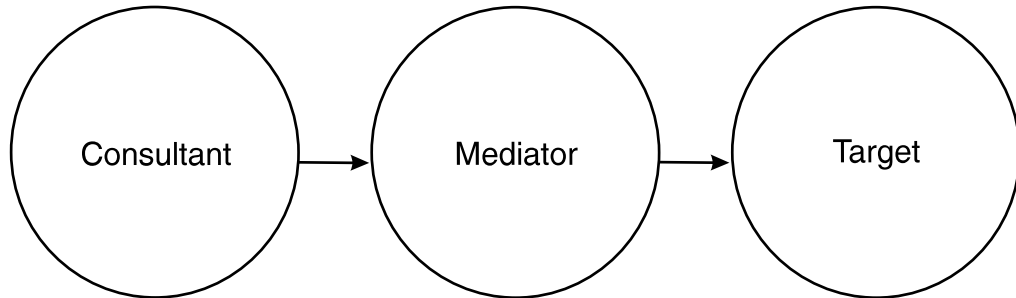


Figure 1. The Basic Triadic System

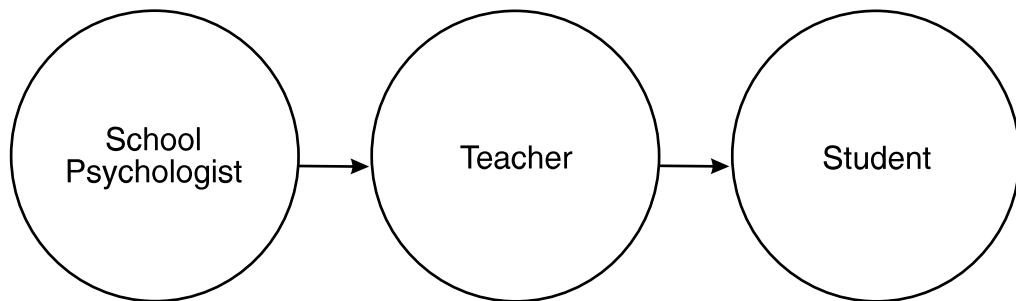


Figure 2. Example of Triadic Model

The same person, in different situations, can be target, mediator, or consultant. For example, a high school teacher might find herself successively in these roles:

Consultant	Mediator	Target
School Psychologist	Principal	<i>Teacher</i>
School Psychologist	<i>Teacher</i>	Student
<i>Teacher</i>	Teacher's Aide	Student

In each case the consultant shares resources with the mediator, and the mediator, enriched with these resources, influences the behavior of the target, enabling the target to engage in constructive behavioral change.

This triadic model can be expanded in both directions. (See Figure 3.) In this scheme teachers are, in different situations, targets, mediators, and consultants. The purpose of this scheme is not to establish a hierarchy or pecking order but to delineate as clearly as possible *resource relationships*. Who has the resources to influence and to help the next person or group down the line achieve desired goals?

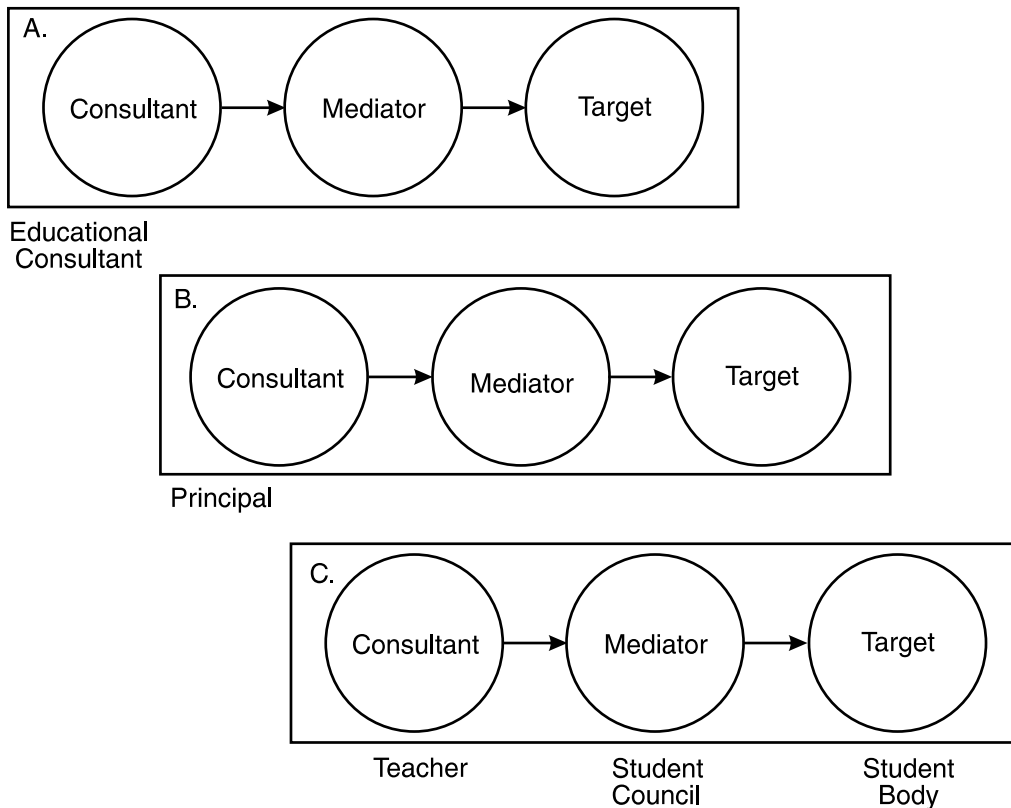


Figure 3. Expanded Triadic Model

If too much emphasis is placed on the mediators' having control over target reinforcements and on the mediators' ability to place these reinforcements on contingency, this model could appear highly controlling and even manipulative. Obviously, this need not be the case. Even though this is a social-influence model, it can be a cooperative venture. For instance, a student (the target) can cooperate in the elaboration of the behavioral contract with the teacher (the mediator), or line workers (targets) can cooperate with the supervisor (mediator) in goal setting.

TARGET SPECIFICATION

One of the first tasks of the consultant is to help the mediator specify the target person or group. In many cases there might be a multiplicity of targets. The following dialogue between a consultant and the minister of a congregation illustrates this process of specification.

C: Whom would you consider the target of your ministry?

M: The members of the congregation.

C: Are there subgroupings in your congregation, that is, groups that have special needs or that receive specialized forms of ministry? In a word, are there different target groups with different needs?

M: Certainly. For instance, there are the members of the Ladies' Auxiliary, the elderly shut-ins, the sick or disabled (whether in the hospital or not), the youth of the parish—I could name many more.

C: Let's choose one of these target groups to use as an example of the program development process.

M: Fine. Let's consider the youth of the parish.

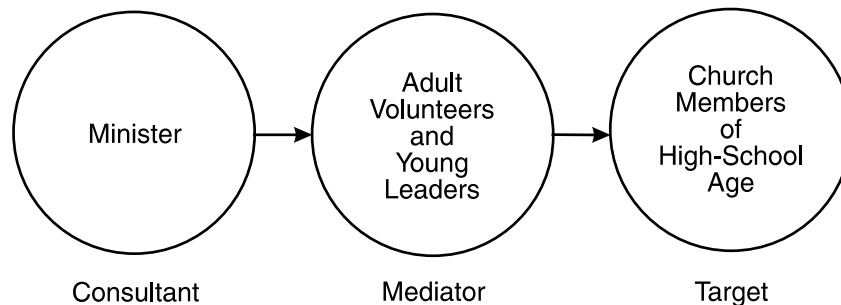
C: Do you see the youth of the parish divided into subgroups?

M: Yes—those of primary school age, those of high-school age, and then the young adults. I'd like to focus on the youth of high-school age as the target population.

C: Do you work with these young people directly, or are others associated with you in creating and running youth programs?

M: That's the problem. I've been trying to do it myself and it's just too much. If any kind of youth programs are going to get off the ground, I think both adult volunteers and young people who are leaders in some sense will have to work with me.

C: Therefore, the model you see is something like this:



If you consider the work that I'm doing with you, then we would put me in a circle to the left of you.

M: I've never looked at myself as a ministerial consultant in the sense you're using the term, but in many ways that is what I must become if my congregation is to become one in which the members minister to one another.

In this case, specifying the ultimate target helped the minister discover the roles of mediator and ministerial consultant as dimensions of the program-development process. The minister sees that there is a multiplicity of targets needing a multiplicity of mediators and programs.

GOAL CLARITY AND THE FUNCTIONS OF CONSULTANT AND MEDIATOR

So far, the triadic model introduces a great deal of clarity and order into the relationships among people trying to help one another in a common venture. However, it is still not clear what the consultant does to help the mediator and what the mediator does to enable the target to engage in constructive behavioral change. *First* it is necessary to learn what the *target* is to do. Only then is it possible to delineate concretely what the mediator is to do to help the target. The triadic model becomes a working instrument when one attempts to discover what the target is to achieve, what target performance means, what target goals are (see Figure 4). For instance, the consultant asks the minister what things he or she would like to see this particular target group (youth of high-school age) do.

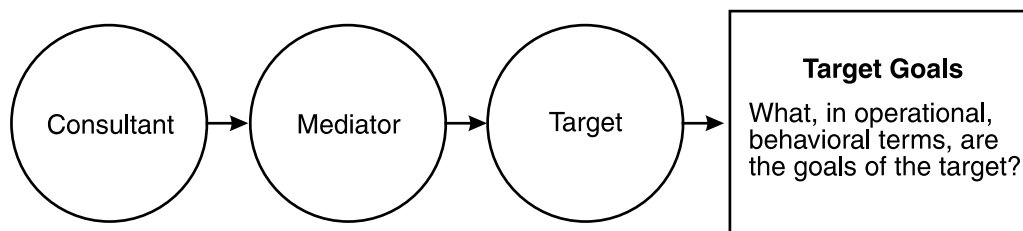


Figure 4. The Model Including Target Goals

M: I'd like to see them be better, more committed Christians.

C: What does a person of high-school age who is a committed Christian do? What are some of the behaviors that such a committed Christian engages in?

M: Well, one example would be service to others.

C: Could you give me an example or two of what forms this service would take? Service to whom? What kind of service?

M: We have a lot of retired, elderly shut-ins in this neighborhood. Many of them could use help in household chores, shopping, help in getting to church functions and around the city. Things like that.

With respect to the target group consisting of youth of high-school age, the model now looks something like Figure 5. For each target group and for each subgrouping within a particular target group, it would be necessary to get a clear picture of just what performance means. What are the goals in operational, behavioral terms? What is performance? If the target performs well, what happens?

PERFORMANCE-RELATED BEHAVIORS

If the target's goals are behaviorally clear, it is easier to determine what kinds of behaviors are related to performance, that is, what kinds of behaviors will achieve target

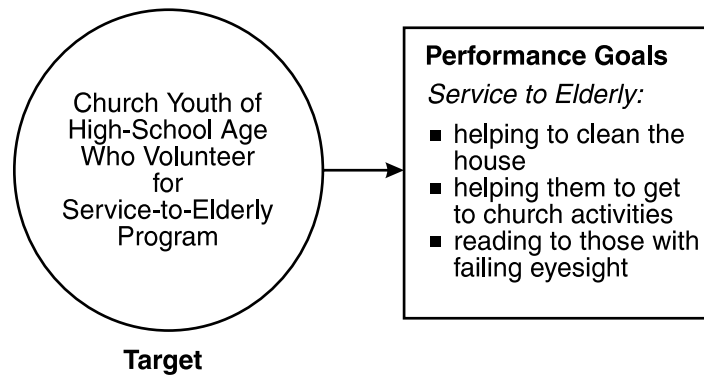


Figure 5. Target Group and Goals

goals. If, for instance, a typist sings beautifully, this talent might be exciting, but it is not related to his or her performance as a typist. If the goal of a publishing house's typing pool is to produce neatly typed and errorless letters and manuscripts within certain time limits, then the members of the pool must engage in the behaviors that produce neatly typed and errorless manuscripts and letters. Another element has been added to the model (see Figure 6).

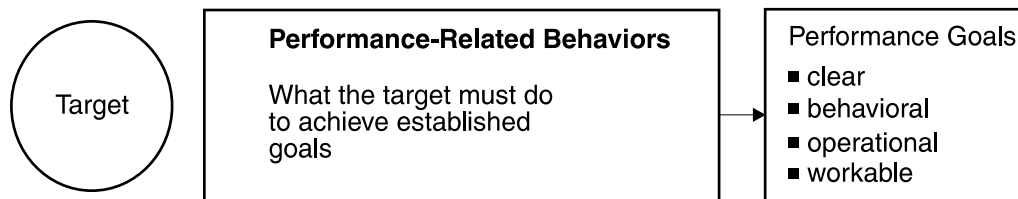


Figure 6. The Model Including Target Behaviors

Unclear target goals will increase the probability that members of the target group will engage in random and unproductive behaviors, behaviors not related to performance. Drucker (1968) suggests that there is a great deal of aimless behavior in government and educational systems (as well as, we might add, ministerial and church systems) because those involved in these systems do not have clearly elaborated performance goals and criteria for success. Since government, education, and church seem to be perennial even when inefficient and ineffective, they are not forced, in the way that most businesses are, to elaborate clear-cut performance goals and to describe the behaviors that enable workers to achieve these goals. Performance-related behaviors can be seen as the means for achieving established goals. When a high-school student vacuums, cleans windows, dusts furniture, and puts out the garbage for an enfeebled shut-in, that student's behaviors achieve the goal of helping the shut-in keep a clean apartment.

INFORMATION AND SKILLS

This model moves backward: the target (the last circle in the line) is the starting point; when considering the target's behavior, the goals are considered first and then the behaviors that achieve those goals. Following this logic, the next question is what information and what skills the target needs in order to engage in performance-related behaviors. For instance, one of the tasks of a volunteer in a hospital program is to welcome the patients after they have checked in, to show them to their rooms, and to give them the initial information they need to lessen their anxiety and to make the beginning of the hospital stay less disorienting. Given these goals, the volunteer needs to know how to go about doing these tasks and what information and skills are needed in order to engage in performance-related behaviors. More generally, what information and skills does the target need in order to engage in performance-related behaviors? These questions enlarge the working model (see Figure 7).

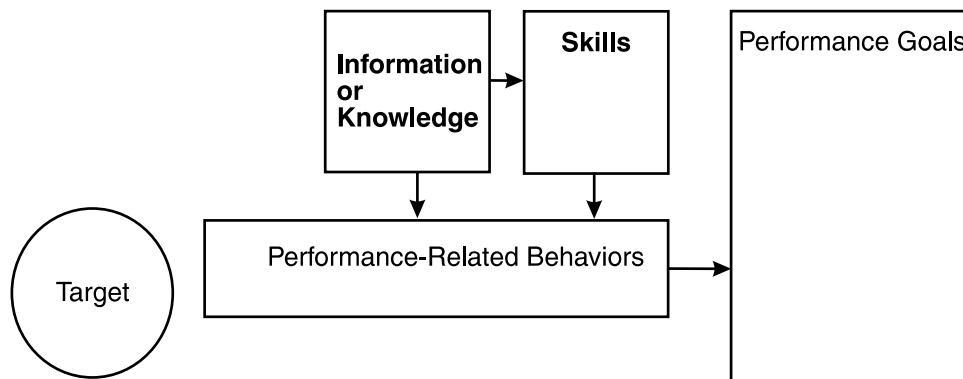


Figure 7. The Model Including Information and Skills Needed for Performance-Related Behaviors

The arrow from the “Information” box points both to “Skills” and to “Performance-Related Behaviors” because information is usually needed to make skills operative. In the case of the hospital volunteer, the volunteer needs clear information about certain basic hospital procedures if he or she is going to offer any kind of meaningful orientation to the patient. The volunteer also needs certain basic interpersonal communication skills to welcome the patient in such a way as to make the entry into the hospital less disorienting.

The volunteer also probably needs some information or awareness about how a patient usually feels when he or she first enters a hospital. This kind of awareness is needed to make the volunteer's interpersonal skills operative (Egan, 1976). It may be that attrition rates in volunteer programs are related, at least partially, to the fact that volunteers are asked to engage in behaviors for which they are not skilled. Very often, relatively simple skill-training programs fill this deficiency.

The information and skill elements of the model pinpoint the education (information, knowledge) and training (skills) needs of the target. A highly skilled and

informed person may, for one reason or another, fail to perform, but an uninformed and unskilled person cannot perform.

ROUNDING OUT THE MODEL: OTHER RESOURCES

One more element is added to round out the model: necessary resources (see Figure 8). In many tasks the target requires more than just information and skills in order to engage in performance-related behaviors. For example, the best typist in the world cannot turn out good copy within given time limits if he or she must work with a defective typewriter. A highly skilled farmer cannot grow quality farm products by using defective seed.

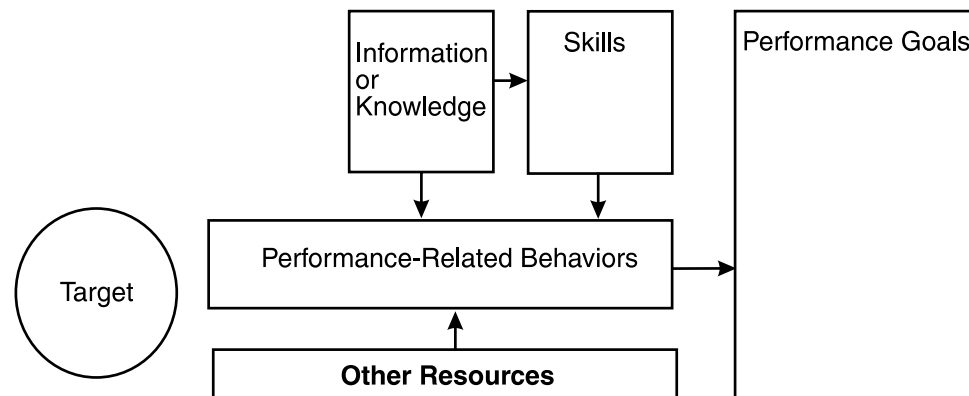


Figure 8. The Model Including Other Resources

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MEDIATOR AND TARGET

The function of the mediator as *mediator* (the mediator may have other functions in the organization) is to influence the target and enable him or her to engage in performance-related behavior. For instance, a principal as mediator to the faculty tries to enable the members of the faculty to teach more effectively and to carry on other education programs more creatively. The model, as it has so far been elaborated (the target system), becomes an instrument that the mediator can use to get a clear picture of the goals and needs of the target system. But this is just the beginning of the usefulness of this model. Once it is clear to the mediator what the target is to do and what the target needs to get the job done, the mediator can use *the same model* to clarify his or her own functions as mediator (see Figure 9).

These, then, are the basic elements of the mediator system:

1. *Performance Goals*. The mediator is successful to the degree that he or she influences and enables the target to achieve performance goals.
2. *Performance-Related Behaviors*. These are the means that the mediator uses to influence and enable the target.

3. *Information or Knowledge.* This is the information the mediator needs to influence the target.

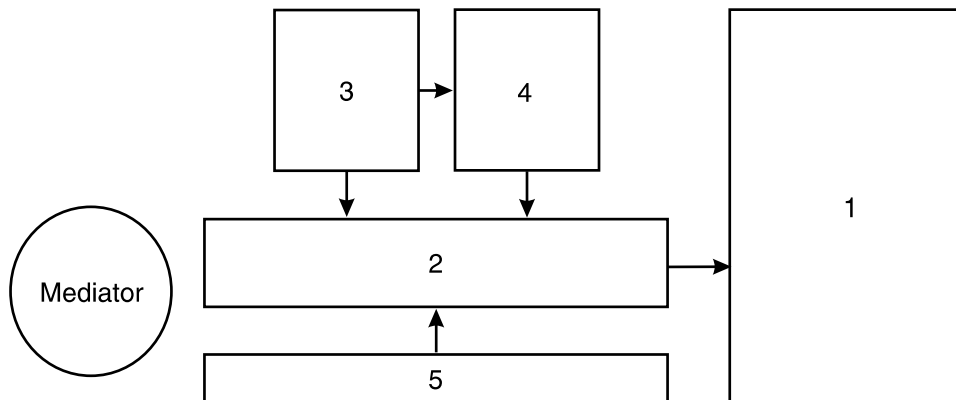


Figure 9. The Mediator System

4. *Skills.* These are the social and program-influence skills, the program-development skills, the interpersonal skills needed by the mediator to be effective, to influence, to enable.
5. *Other Resources.* Different tasks will require the mediator to use a variety of resources in the influencing/enabling process.

Mediator Functions

Some common mediator functions are the following.

Goal Setting

The mediator helps the target understand the goal/performance-related-behavior system. For instance, the mediator meets with the target, the target group, or representatives of the target group and cooperatively establishes goals, objectives, and priorities for the target system. In order to do this, the mediator needs goal-development and goal-setting skills. If the goals are being set cooperatively, he or she needs interpersonal skills, bargaining skills, conflict-management skills, and so forth. The mediator certainly has to know how to spell out goals with behavioral clarity.

Program Development

With the participation of the target or target representatives, the mediator develops the means through which performance goals can be reached. If there is a variety of means, the mediator helps the target clarify which set of means might be most efficient, which set might be most reinforcing for the target, etc.

Training

Knowing the information and skill needs of the target population, the mediator either educates and trains the target population or gets competent educators/trainers to do so. For instance, a sales supervisor might work with his or her sales force directly in terms of goal setting and program development, but then have others train the sales force in the interpersonal skills and sales techniques needed for performance.

Being a Source of Reinforcement

The mediator needs a working knowledge of the laws of human behavior such as reinforcement, the effects of punishment (especially the negative side effects), the power of aversive conditioning, the usefulness of modeling, and the necessity of shaping procedures in program development and implementation. If the mediator is unaware of these principles and how they work, he or she can be incapacitated by them.

The mediator is usually a potent source of social and other kinds of reinforcement; he or she can also help targets identify and develop reinforcement systems for themselves. For example, a teacher as mediator might discover that his or her shouting at disruptive students is actually rewarding those who engage in such classroom behavior. The students like being yelled at because it is a specialized form of attention and it interrupts the tedium of ordinary classroom sessions. The teacher goes on to develop classroom programs that capture the imagination of the students, and disruptive behavior lessens.

Providing Feedback

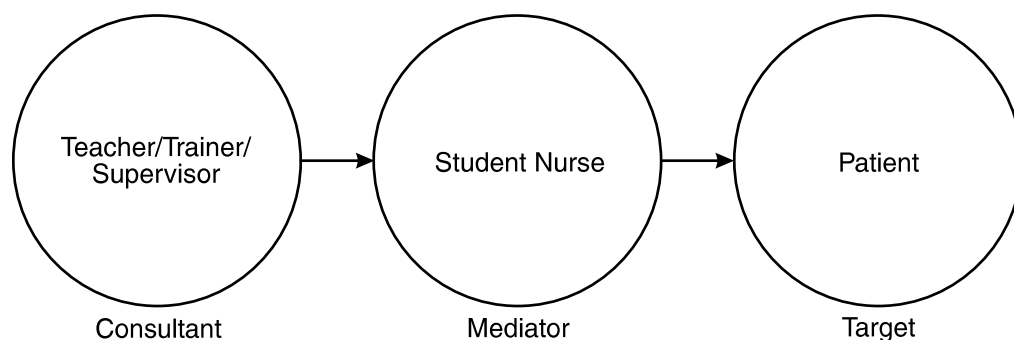
Very often the performance of the members of a target population is directly related to the quality of the feedback they receive. The mediator is certainly one source of that feedback. The mediator can help establish feedback loops in the production system. Solid, data-based feedback (even about mistakes) is usually positive reinforcement for the target. The mediator needs confrontational skills that are neither anemic nor punishing (see Egan, 1976).

Helping

The mediator might also at times be a helper or quasi-counselor for the target. For instance, if the target is discouraged about his or her progress or is having difficulties with a fellow worker, the mediator might help him or her explore and handle the problem. To do this, however, the mediator needs a basic grasp of helping skills and procedures (see Egan, 1975).

Application

These mediator functions can be applied, using the example of a student nurse in a training hospital. The following system exists in the hospital:



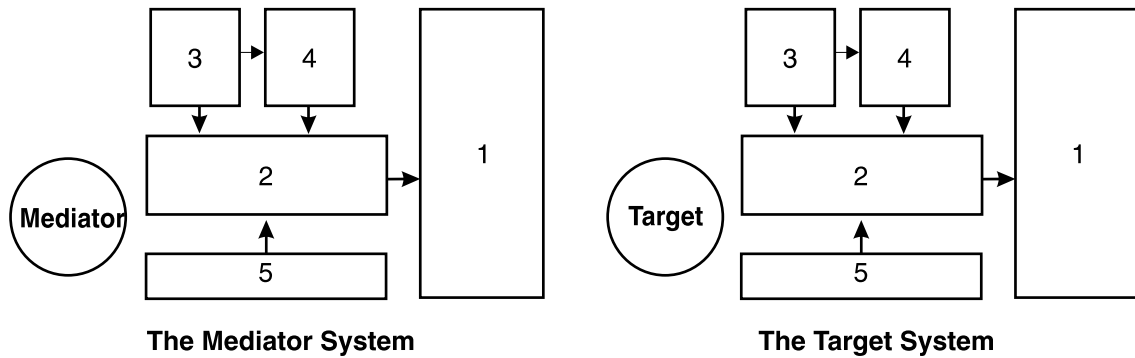
In this system the patient is considered a target because the hospital staff sees the patient as a person who cooperates in the health programs offered to him or her. The patient, then, is an agent, not just a passive target. Patient X is involved in a rehabilitation program after an automobile accident and needs certain information, skills, and other resources (for example, an exercise machine) to reach performance goals. While at times the student nurse might do things to the patient (for instance, administer injections) the nurse also engages in goal setting, program development, and training with the patient. In a word, he or she is a *mediator* and needs information, skills, and resources to perform mediating functions.

The model, therefore, identifies the educational and training needs not only of the target population, but also of the mediator. The mediator does not know what his or her specific functions should be until he or she acquires a behavioral understanding of the target system. The model now looks as it appears in Figure 10.

THE CONSULTANT

It is now clear that the interventions and the functions of the consultant are determined by the needs of both the mediator and the target systems and the interactions between these two systems. What the consultant does, *as triadic consultant*, must ultimately have an impact on the target system and on target performance. In this model the mediator influences and enables the target, and the consultant influences and enables the mediator. Therefore, the kinds of skills the consultant needs to influence the mediator effectively are similar to the skills needed by the mediator to influence the target. (See Figure 11.)

As with the mediator, the performance goals of the consultant are relational—that is, the overall goal is to influence and enable the mediator in such a way that the latter is able to help the target more effectively achieve performance goals.



- 1: Performance goals
- 2: Performance-related behaviors, the means to achieve the goals
- 3: Information or knowledge needed to engage in performance-related behaviors
- 4: Skills needed to engage in performance-related behaviors
- 5: Other resources needed to engage in performance-related behaviors

Figure 10. The Mediator System and the Target System

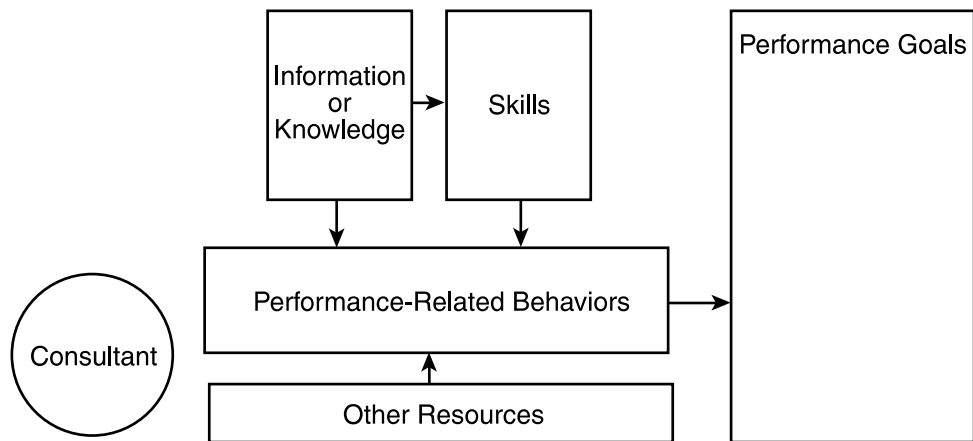


Figure 11. The Consultant System

Some Common Consultant Functions

One way of looking at the functions of the consultant would be to review mediator functions to see how the consultant uses similar processes and methodologies to facilitate the work of the mediator. However, another way of visualizing some of the critical functions of the consultant is to review, briefly, how he or she would help a mediator system (and, indirectly, a target system) move through a systematic process of change, using a systematic model of change (Egan, 1985). It is important to note that in all the stages of this model, the triadic consultant does not do the work of the mediator or assume the responsibilities of the mediator group. Without usurping the mediator role, the consultant can “walk” the mediator group through the model. Another way of saying this is that the consultant does not execute target-directed programs for the

mediator but does whatever is necessary to increase the ability of the mediator group to fashion and execute programs.

Diagnosis

The consultant helps the mediator group discover how it goes about diagnosing and helps it discover more effective ways of going about a behavioral diagnosis of the system (target, mediator, mediator-target) and its subsystems. This includes helping the mediator assess both the readiness and the capability of an organization to change.

New Perspectives

By helping the mediator use such processes as brainstorming, scenario writing, fantasy, and similar techniques, the consultant enables the mediator to see new possibilities for the entire system—for example, new ways of manufacturing a product, new ways of ministering to a congregation through volunteer groups, new ways of relating to and interacting with the target system, and so forth. The triadic consultant does not do the brainstorming, but helps the mediator group develop brainstorming methodologies and then, perhaps, “walks” the group through some of these methodologies.

Goal Setting

The consultant shows the mediator how to go about establishing behavioral goals and setting priorities in view of the possibilities discovered during the “new perspectives” stage. The consultant may demonstrate goal-setting methodologies and train the mediator system in the skills of using them.

The Search for Means

Again, helping the mediator develop such processes as brainstorming and force-field analysis, the consultant enables the mediator to learn how to develop and consider a wide rather than a narrow range of means for accomplishing goals that have been set.

Choosing Means

The consultant helps the mediator establish ways of evaluating specific sets of means and choosing those most adapted to the human and technological needs of the organization.

Program Implementation

The mediator is helped by the consultant to become aware of the laws of behavior maintenance and change and to apply these to launching a program and maintaining momentum in it. The consultant observes how the mediator system goes about this process and gives data-based feedback. Ideally, he or she shows the mediator system how to get useful data-based feedback from the members of the organization.

Program Evaluation

The consultant shows the mediator group how to design program-evaluation methodologies and how to make evaluation a constructive, ongoing process within the system rather than a judgmental, end-of-the-line statement.

The consultant, then, is an educator, trainer, observer, monitor/supervisor with respect to the mediator. To the degree that the consultant takes over the functions of the mediator (for example, if the consultant does the diagnosis, if the minister runs the youth programs, if the nursing supervisor trains the rehabilitation patient), he or she ceases to be a *triadic* consultant.

A map of the full triadic system is found in Figure 12. Each section of the model (I, II, and III) becomes a work sheet (see Figure 13) for developing behavioral clarity with respect to each system's goals, means and needs for information/skills/resources, while the full model becomes a work sheet for clarifying behavioral relationships among the individual units (I, II, and III) of the complete triadic system.

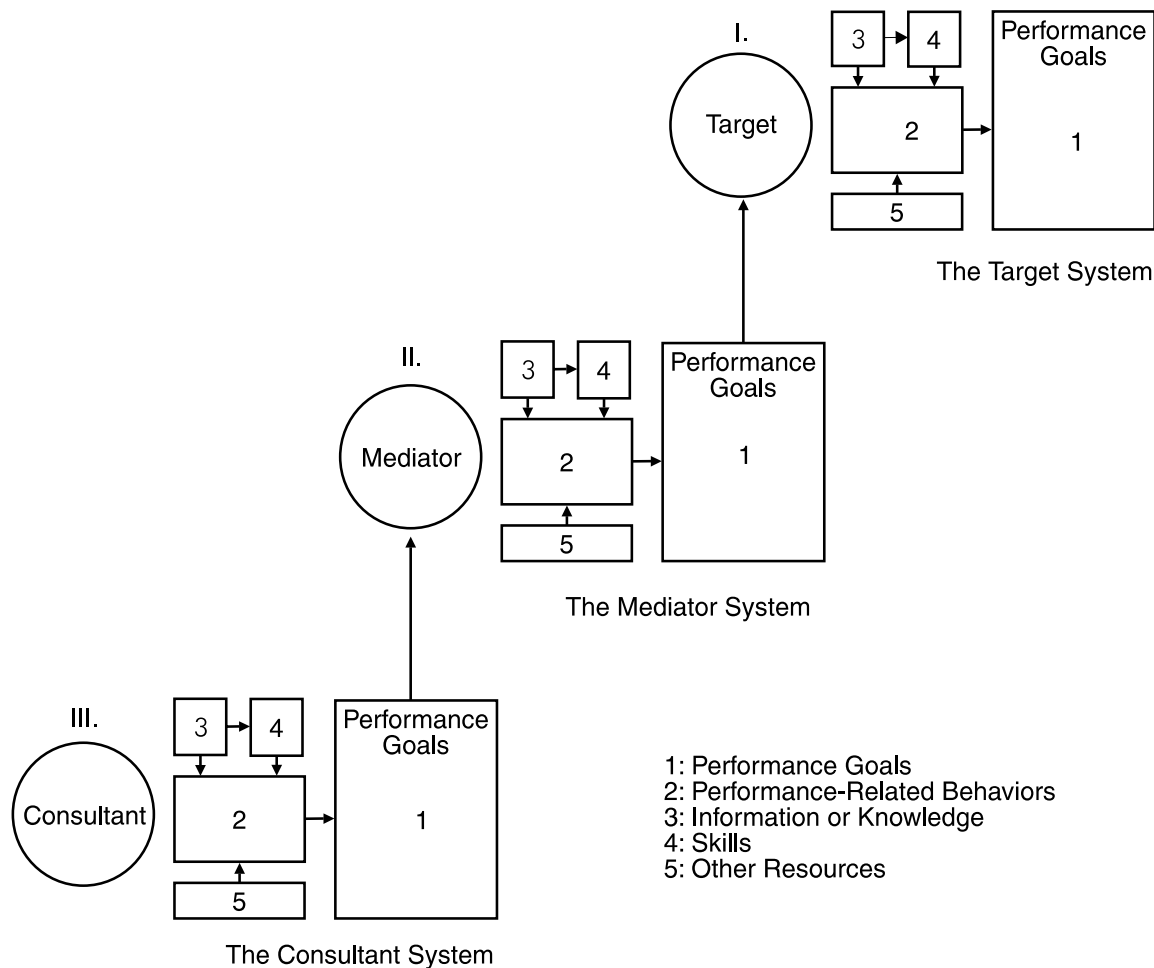


Figure 12. The Complete Triadic System

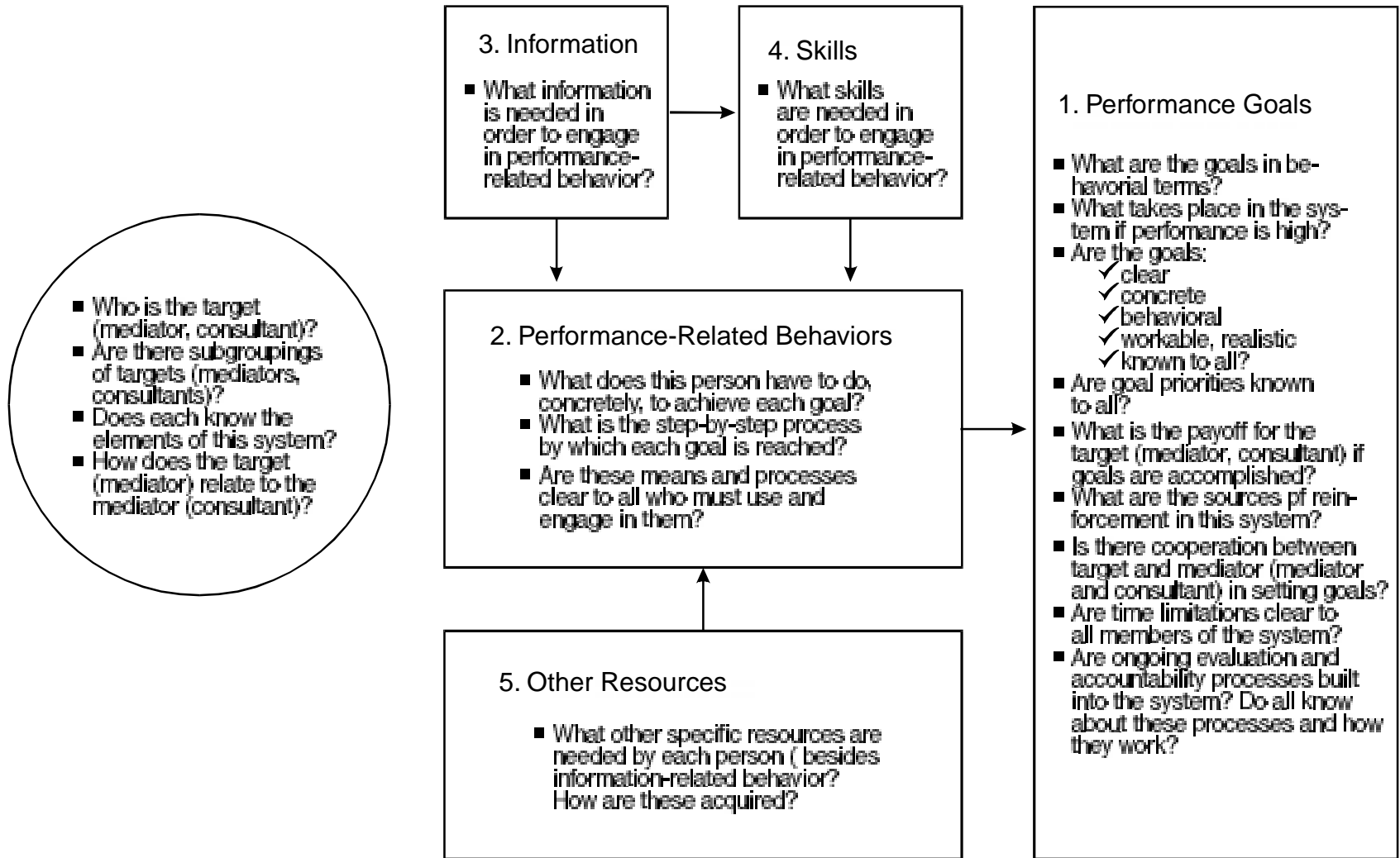


Figure 13. A Triadic Model Work Sheet

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this article is not to give an exhaustive account of the kinds of information, skills, methodologies, and other resources needed by consultants and mediators to be effective, but to describe an instrument that enables consultants, mediators, and targets to identify these needs and to see the interrelationships of these needs—and to do so with behavioral clarity. Nor is it assumed that this model as elaborated accounts for all the variables of system change and development. No model can do that and be practical. Any model must be simple enough to be practical and complex enough to be real, and this model, in many consultations, has fulfilled both conditions.

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■ CONFIGURATIONAL LEARNING: PRINCIPLES FOR FACILITATING CHANGE AND LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE

Sam Farry

At the same time, different people believe things to be different, and to the same person things seem quite different from the way they appeared only a few weeks or months ago. It is difficult, however, to determine exactly what is different or how it is different. This is the nature of what is often referred to as “social change” or individual “psychological change.” Configurational learning is a holistic way of understanding and consciously engaging such change.

In this article, the principles of configurational learning are outlined to help facilitators of individual, social, and organizational change to organize, “invent,” and critique the activities in which they engage as “agents of change.” Many times facilitators wonder “What should I do?” or “What should I do next?” This article discusses the conditions of configurational learning, activities to stimulate such learning, and additional suggestions. Each point is considered in terms of how it relates to configurational learning, and each is illustrated with possible applications for facilitators with widely different backgrounds and from many different fields.

Concept of Change

Although the idea that everything is in a constant state of flux may seem foreign to Western thought, it is increasingly supported by the most advanced of the physical sciences—high energy particle physics. Individuals continuously participate in this ceaseless process of changing and interpret their interactions in it. The fact that confusion exists over changing and not changing is largely a function of people’s lack of awareness of changing as it occurs and a distortion in the common usage of language. Each individual, guided by tacit social agreements embedded in language patterns and previous experience, consciously or unconsciously selects what to perceive and how to interpret it—i.e., the individual develops a configuration. Each *configuration* represents an implicit decision about what, out of a total context, is important or irrelevant and what to pay attention to or ignore. Typically this activity passes unnoticed (out of awareness), thus leaving the impression that things are static and must be made to change. Therefore, “social change” or “psychological change” usually refers to changing an only apparently static condition.

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Configurational learning is the process that occurs naturally when individually determined configurations change. The process involves organization: rearranging, adding to, subtracting from, and reevaluating previous configurations. Configurational learning may be experienced as an active process of exploration or simply as vital living. The idea of configurational learning acknowledges that people's natural interpreting and organizing activities are in fact equivalent to "changing" and encourages gaining an appreciation of and facility with this process rather than attempting to force something that occurs anyway.

Facilitation of Change

From a configurational learning point of view, the problem of change is not how to make it happen, but how to redirect attention when a certain configuration seems unsatisfactory. The objective is to enable an individual's inherent organizing and changing process to create a new, more useful configuration. Thus, the principal functions of the facilitator are to promote clarification of existing configurations and prompt a change in those that are inadequate by sufficiently confusing their structure so as to cast them in a new light. For an individual or individuals in groups, redirecting attention is equivalent to Lewin's (1947) concept of "unfreezing." Lewin's other two stages, "moving" and "freezing," are represented respectively by configurational learning and by the emergence of a new and more satisfactory configuration.

More explanation may help in understanding this definition of facilitation and the concept of a configuration. A configuration is more than a set of ideas or an abstracted mental construct. Rather, it is a tightly integrated network of the relationships among all of one's capacities and perceptions. In fact, it could be depicted as a completely orchestrated scenario with provisions for ideas, theories, actions, images, sensations, feelings, beliefs, relationships, values, opinions, environmental props, and even consequences and predictions of the future. In terms of a person's configuration, the world is literally different for an insecure person than it is for someone who is secure. Or, the world is different for an individual when that person is hungry than when he or she is not. Transactional analysis has popularized certain configurational arrangements as ego states, games, and scripts (Berne, 1961).

It could be said that configurations and situations are flip sides of the same coin. They evoke one another and both depend on and determine what one pays attention to. An adult's configurations typically come from a well-practiced repertoire that has become habitual; most of the configurations' properties and relationships remain unnoticed; however, everyday life involves many configurational shifts to meet individual needs and circumstances. This shifting is a less dramatic form of configurational learning that, over time, stimulates minor adjustments and gradual changes in the configurational repertoire.

Each person's configuration prepares him or her for organized action, but by so doing, it inhibits the formation of alternative courses of action. Paradoxically, a configuration that makes the world appear stable, and thus manageable, also precludes

an appreciation of the natural propensities for changing. One configuration blocks another. This blocking phenomenon can be seen through the now classic ambiguous pictures used by Gestalt psychologists to study visual perception. In the normal course of events, when a configuration outlives its usefulness, the person becomes bored and develops a special interest in changing—in trying new ways.

Impetus for change can come about for various reasons:

1. Inhibition may not be complete; one may be confused. A person whose configuration, because of changing conditions, fails often enough to effectively manage his actions eventually takes note, becomes concerned, and intentionally seeks out new possibilities. This is the most dramatic and engaging instance of the natural process of configurational learning.
2. A configuration may seem wrong or self-defeating, thus sparking an uncomfortable feeling and also bringing about change. Of course, any skilled facilitator knows that the discomfort of an unsatisfactory configuration does not always promote effective change. If a person thinks that he or she needs to make change happen, that person is likely to push harder within the context of the existing unsatisfactory configuration rather than loosen its inhibiting effects by intentionally redirecting attention, reinterpreting, and heightening awareness. This is when the facilitator's skill effectively comes into play.

Facilitator's Role In Change

Facilitative qualities such as trust and support are very important, as is insight, the most widely accepted objective of facilitation and a sign of completed configurational learning. The most dramatic instances of configurational learning come when a person creates new configurations out of whole cloth, so to speak, a process that requires tremendous amounts of energy. The rules are by no means clear. Because there is no tried and true method to fall back on, the process can also produce discomfort, anxiety, and disorientation. Understanding, accepting, and communicating these aspects of configurational learning are important parts of the facilitator's role.

Periods of the most dramatic configurational learning are referred to as *crises*. Sudden insight into problems is the frequently experienced result of crises because the increased energy and special awareness brought to bear can contribute to unusual lucidity, perhaps even to a profound sense of wholeness and connection with the universe. More often, however, the resulting experience is one of "Aha, I've got it together," "Right on," "I feel centered," etc. Or more modest configurational rearrangements may be accompanied merely by the sense that an uncomfortable feeling has been reduced. All these experiences are evidence of completed configurational learning. Nearly everyone can remember having such experiences at some time in his or her life and can learn to recognize them as milestones in the life process.

CONDITIONS CONDUCTIVE TO CONFIGURATIONAL LEARNING

Certain conditions are best for configurational learning; it is the facilitator's function to encourage these conditions in order that configurational learning can take place most readily.

Taking a Playful or Adventurous Attitude

A new configuration can seem as secure as an old one, but the process of forming the new configuration can cause discomfort, anxiety, and disorientation. From the perspective of a familiar existing configuration—no matter how unsatisfactory—new possibilities seem strange and foolish. A playful or adventurous attitude is helpful to set the stage for effective configurational learning. In fact, addressing a problem with either or both of these attitudes may in itself be sufficient for a new, more satisfactory configuration to emerge.

A facilitator can encourage an individual or a group to adopt such an attitude merely by being willing to appear foolish himself or herself. Sometimes it can be useful to introduce, temporarily, a set of rules that will supplant existing rules of behavior and facilitate playfulness. For instance, the facilitator can set time limits on exploration activity or divide the total time for a group meeting into three or four subsegments by beginning and ending the meeting several times during the regularly allotted period. Other rules such as “You can be foolish only if you stand on this rug or sit in this chair” can be utilized.

Allowing Awareness

An awareness of what is happening at the moment is essential for formation of a new configuration. Because awareness is constantly shifting, however, increasing it typically requires practice. When attended to closely, awareness can be experienced to move from inside oneself (feelings and sensations) to outside, and the other way around. Frequently, it includes thoughts that have no noticeable sensory component. Few people are trained to be aware of slight shifts or to be directly aware of their several senses at once. A heightened awareness of what is happening can be threatening, and the threat can block the awareness and substitute a personal interpretation or fantasy.

The frequently heard suggestion to be “nondefensive” is an attempt to reduce any such blockage. This, however, is much easier to say than to do; openness to experience and awareness cannot be forced. But it is possible to acknowledge and appreciate the awareness that does exist until one learns that one's awareness can be trusted.

Meditation can be good practice for expanding awareness, as can answering specific questions such as “Right now what are you aware of?” Observers can contribute their observations. For group or intergroup situations, completing a narrowly defined task (such as agreeing on who talks the most or building a model) can draw attention to certain characteristics of that situation such as voice quality, interaction patterns, etc.

The essential point is to allow an expanded awareness, not to try to interpret it, to solve problems, or to otherwise block it.

Redirecting Attention

Attention can be redirected to clarify the current configuration, to bring into focus how it works and what it includes and does not include, or to clarify potentially valuable dimensions previously missing or out of place.

Redirection is equivalent to disturbing a current configuration so that a new one can emerge. If ideas are most salient in the present configuration, one might try attending to feelings or actions; if one is enmeshed in emotions, being aware of concepts might prove fruitful.

Many people are not accustomed to distinguishing between what is happening to them *now* and what they think would happen under other circumstances. Calling attention to this distinction by paying attention to the here and now can often cause a readjustment in the current configuration.

Some people find focusing attention uncomfortable or threatening. If this is the case, practice is critical. An answer to the question “Where are you?” or “What’s happening right now?” will clarify the locus of attention and what is going on (the current configuration). Making a statement as some event occurs can facilitate directing attention to that event. For example, if a tennis player is distracted and not paying attention to the ball, he or she can practice saying out loud “bounce” each time the ball hits the ground and “hit” each time it hits the racket (Gallway, 1974). Or a person can notice his or her breathing by counting each breath.

In a group, someone can be appointed to call attention to the location of the discussion as it shifts—here/now/there/then. Sometimes a conceptual model of sequential stages in an activity can direct attention to the group’s stage at the moment. Reports can also be used effectively to direct attention.

Owning Experience

The idea is simply to clarify whose experiences are whose by accepting responsibility for “those that are mine.” If an experience or its cause has been attributed to someone else because it is not acceptable in a current configuration, merely “owning” it can spark configurational learning. Owning adds material potentially essential to a new, more satisfactory configuration. Everyone has had experiences or emotions that are considered socially or morally unacceptable, such as experiencing delight at someone else’s pain or the more personal experiences of affection or anger. If some of these emotions are not acceptable in a current configuration, a person can simply own as many as possible. Perhaps he or she will muster the courage to own more at another time.

Owning experiences can be greatly facilitated simply by practicing statements with the correct pronoun: “I” rather than “we” or “you.” Instead of “You don’t like me,” an owned statement might be more like “I’m uncomfortable because I believe that you don’t like me.” An activity to help check out owned experiences is “I believe, you

believe.” One person says, “I believe that you believe...,” and the other party reciprocates. One can also try reversing pronouns to see if they fit: for instance, “I am” instead of “you are.” Owning what “I want” can be a powerful antidote to feeling low and powerless.

The same condition exists for groups. Instead of “They won’t let us,” an owned statement might be “We’re afraid.” A facilitator can appoint someone to be chief nitpicker on this distinction. Owning experience also is facilitated by an individual or group assuming responsibility for a task by undertaking the completion of a tangible product such as a paper, a chart, or a model based on an immediate or recent experience. For example, a group could prepare a model showing the relationships among members of the group.

Sensitivity training groups aim for consensual validation of experience, a form of owning experience in contrast to habitual and reflexive behavior patterns such as rebelliousness, submission, or withdrawal.

Commitment, especially in the presence of others, to do something or assume responsibility for something can be an expression of having owned an experience. In this case, the experience is the involvement and perhaps anguish required merely to take the stand or make the commitment. Owning experience is equivalent to the transactional analysis notion of “I’m O.K.” or the *est* notion of “I’ve got it.” The conditions (described later) of “taking sides” and “taking a position” are also forms of owning experience.

Testing for Fit and Completion

Testing for fit and completion is one way to discover an unsatisfactory configuration or specific possibilities for a better one. Although everyone has the innate capacity to know when a configuration fits or seems right, people frequently act out of habit or at someone else’s suggestions and are likely to misread evidence that a configuration is out of line with current circumstances. It is easy to deceive oneself and ignore the vague sense of discomfort that signals an unsatisfactory configuration.

Completion is the feeling that the configuration does fit and that no new exploration is necessary. Not being able to tell the distinction between “It’s time to stop” and “I feel finished” can result in a backlog of unfinished material from previous situations. Although nothing is completely finished until one dies, being unaware of carryover interferes with awareness in new surroundings and serves to block spontaneous configuration-forming capacities. For example, if one is still angry with the people at work, it may be difficult to enjoy an evening with the family. Unfortunately, completion can be troublesome, and it is sometimes avoided because it involves a sense of personal loss—an accustomed configuration or long-standing problem is a reliable old friend.

To test for fit, people can take alternate positions (yes or no) on whether a particular configuration fits, in order to get a clearer sense of what is true for them. If the answer is “I don’t know” or “I can’t tell the difference,” then clarification is necessary. One can also alternate between the following positions: it is, it is not the problem; I want it, I

don't want it; I'm afraid, I'm not afraid; I will do it, I won't do it; I appreciate, I resent. If both seem to fit, then the question is *how* they both fit. Sometimes a person needs to acknowledge that feelings that commonly do not go together, such as "I love you and (rather than *but*) I don't want to marry you" or "I dislike the job *and* I'm willing to continue working here," can exist simultaneously. It may be difficult to discover apparent contradictions by oneself. In this case another person can be helpful to suggest lines to be tested for fit.

Sometimes a concrete action such as drawing a model can be a productive way for a group of people to test for fit, or people can act out a situation that seems unsatisfactory to pinpoint what is out of place or missing. If a number of people are available, the person whose problem it is can assign positions and characteristic actions and lines to other participants who volunteer to be actors. Trying out alternative approaches is also a good way to test for fit. Questions such as the following can be useful: "Am I finished?," "Is there more?," "When should we meet again?," or "Are you ready to sign?"

Testing for completion involves saying good-bye. To conclude a meeting systematically and effectively, it is often useful for people to express directly what they have left unsaid—residual resentments or good feelings. A clear and sharp conclusion allows the meeting to end without emotional hangover.

Testing for completion can also be a good way to start a meeting. Those attending can "leave behind" previous situations or people. Each person can complete the sentence "Right now, I am aware of..." to discover if he or she is really ready to attend to the business at hand. Often, merely checking on awareness allows the unfinished material to be put aside and attention to be focused on the meeting.

ACTIVITIES TO STIMULATE CONFIGURATIONAL LEARNING

The facilitator's function is to clarify existing but inadequate configurations in order to permit spontaneous reorganizing and changing processes to occur. Activities can be framed to show individuals how to improve their own capacity for redirecting attention and how their configurational learning is facilitated by others in individual, group, or larger social contexts.

Beginning Where the Interest Is

Configurational learning requires energy. Participant interest is a sign of energy and often is a reliable guide to what needs attention, i.e., what is unsatisfactory about a current configuration. What is wanted may be clear, but the current configuration may obscure how to get it effectively; or what is wanted may be obscure, in which case beginning with participant interest is likely to turn up valuable clues.

Approaching a problem by going over it again and again is likely to retrench a current configuration rather than produce a fresh one. Instead, a facilitator can focus on his or her own immediate awareness of the problem or situation, be it a person, a feeling,

a condition, or an object. If interest is not clear, one can pace up and down the room or ruminate out loud about the problem in an effort to heighten awareness. Another approach is to imagine that one is “in the center of the problem,” e.g., in the office or in one’s retirement years.

Groups often elude configurational learning by sticking to a preset objective or agenda, but an already existing configuration can inhibit the formation of a new one. Thus, spontaneous, though apparently scattered, expressions of individual interest are likely to serve the group better. Various perceptions can be put on newsprint for a rich array of material to stimulate creative problem solving.

Doing It Differently

Doing it, as opposed to talking about it or being told about it, brings out all aspects of a configuration and is likely to uncover blockages. Doing it can take any form that feels best: writing, acting, lecturing, painting, singing, miming, etc. Intentionally doing it differently, even though “different” may not necessarily represent a more desirable configuration, mixes up the current configuration and directs attention to possibilities for a configuration previously thought to be unimportant.

To do it differently, a person who is feeling the situation can try thinking it or vice versa. Instead of going from front to back, a person can try going from back to front or turn the situation upside down or make right wrong and wrong right, etc.

Participants can be encouraged to pick a common public situation, such as walking down a street, riding on an elevator, or eating in a restaurant, and to redefine the situation and act out their new definition; e.g., groups have used elevators as a place to meet people or restaurants as a place to try out a new personality.

“Doing it” is most obvious when interpersonal problems are involved, and role playing seems natural as a kind of practice for “reality.” However, even if the problem is physical or conceptual, it can be explored by “doing it.” Examples of such problems would be “How could a house be invented that requires no commercial energy?” or “What is the relationship among atoms in a chloroform molecule?” Someone can play the role of a house or a molecule or a career, etc. Simulations can involve elaborately constructed props and circumstances or they can be carried out completely in one’s imagination.

Taking a Position

Taking a position in this case is quite different from the way a person might typically consider a problem: i.e., “I would like to do this; but on the other hand, I want to do that; however, that would interfere with . . .” Instead, by taking a position, a person can explore these desires or considerations one at a time and can more fully experience his or her position without negating it by premature moderation. This approach also adds interest to the exploration.

A group as a whole can also take a position, perhaps prepare a manifesto on what is wrong with or good about another group (a typical first step in an organization development intergroup laboratory [Fordyce & Weil, 1971]).

Taking Sides, Confronting, Clarifying

Taking sides serves to contrast one aspect of a situation in relation to another, thereby clearly revealing the structure and content of a current configuration. Taking sides may seem counterproductive, but if an unsatisfactory configuration exists, trying to keep it together impedes the progress of configurational learning. The objective of taking sides is not to tear apart but to achieve clarified differentiation. By first taking one side and then the other, one can determine what the real issue is. This sets the stage for spontaneous integration of solutions.

If the issue is an interpersonal or interorganizational dispute, taking sides (contrary to many currently popular theories) can be valuable to crystallize the relative subtleties, capacities, and needs of each party. Role plays or psychodramas are useful applications; a critical point for the structuring of a role play or psychodrama, however, is the question of *who* is interested in forming a new configuration. Because each person has his or her own configurational learning, one person's insight may be different from the insight of others.

If advocates get locked into one side of a win-lose struggle, they are more likely to block rather than facilitate their own configurational learning. There is a higher probability that configurational learning will occur when participants alternate sides of the situation. For example, someone could write a letter to someone else and then write a response to his or her own letter. In an intergroup relations development laboratory, members of each group are often asked to prepare a list of what bothers them about the other group; then they are asked to prepare a list of what they think will be on the other group's list. The popular "two-chair" exercise of Gestalt therapy (Perls, 1973) is the prototype of contrasting two sides. Using this method, a person explores his or her own conflicts in dealing with another person by first sitting in one chair, imagining the other person in the opposite empty chair, and talking to that person. When a response is called for, the person switches chairs and responds as the other person. The dialogue continues until a new configuration is reached.

Noticing and Acknowledging What Is Going On

Although one can learn to take inventory and systematically to check out what is going on in an effort to find inconsistencies or things unaccounted for in a current configuration, the process can be very difficult for an individual on his or her own. A facilitator can call attention to fruitful areas for exploration and inconsistencies that may be pieces of a new configuration. It is especially useful to notice movements and sensations.

Some useful activities for training one's capacity to notice specific areas include directing attention to relaxing various parts of the body, engaging one sense at a time

and noting the effect of this, concentrating all senses on one object, or intentionally mixing senses, such as drawing a picture of the musical note high C. Watching body language has become a popular pastime, but rather than interpret posture, as some people are inclined to do, one might more productively study form, function, and grace and their relationship to thoughts or feelings. Listening to the qualities of voices (one's own and others), such as timbre, pitch, or rhythm, can offer extremely valuable clues to feelings, as can watching people's expressions. Paying attention to images, emotions, feelings, thoughts, and hunches perhaps takes more work, but one can heighten sensitivity to these factors by imagining oneself in situations that might provoke certain emotions, thoughts, or feelings.

Following Awareness and Interest

Determining what is significant or potentially productive in any given situation may seem to require the skills of a good theatrical director. A very useful guide for the facilitator is to follow his or her own interest and awareness. The facilitator's capacity for forming configurations often will enable him or her to call attention to what is missing, blocked, or out of place. If the facilitator's interest shifts or if he or she is aware of something new, he or she can give it proper attention, savor it, and include it in the exploration activities. If the change in direction is misplaced, the facilitator can find out soon enough by testing for fit.

Despite common belief, an emotion, once experienced fully, tends to be forgotten. It is the blocked, unexperienced emotions that cause pain and attract attention. Those aspects of the situation that are currently hidden are likely to be uncovered then, if the natural flow of awareness and interest is paid attention to. Typically, much information is taken in and discarded or assimilated without notice, and immediate sensory awareness is blocked. A facilitator can redirect attention by bringing up what is most obvious and interesting to him or her (but perhaps not to someone else)—his or her own awareness.

Writing, poetry, painting, and sculpting, if conducted without concern for "correctness," can also be powerful methods for focusing attention on emotional content. To explore further, a group could act out a painting or sculpture that has been completed or engage in a dialogue between aspects of a painting.

Intensifying or Diminishing

Intensifying an action makes the underlying precepts distinct. For instance, instead of requesting, we may "demand" or instead of talking we may shout. Intensifying an action encourages wholeheartedness, the engagement of all of one's faculties, and thus a deepening of the experience. Intensity can spark sensations and thoughts that are tied to an earlier experience; i.e., one may recall a moving situation from the past on hearing a certain song, etc. By experimentally intensifying an action or an emotion, a person may be able more accurately to identify its underlying characteristics and special properties.

Direct and demanding actions are taken most freely if the context is distinctly understood to be one of exploration. Phrases such as “I want” or “I demand” instead of “would you please” accentuate the transactional character of the situation and facilitate understanding, especially of relationships. “Yes” or “no” and “I will” or “I won’t” are clearer than “maybe” or “I will if” Sometimes lack of insight into one’s immediate desires is tied to a sense of powerlessness. Experimenting with being more forceful, for instance, shouting, can often unlock awareness of these desires.

Individuals can also experiment with intensity by physically moving closer or farther away when talking with someone, to calibrate just how “close” emotionally they are at that time or to examine the effect of a certain mode of interaction on the distance. One can experiment with looking directly at or away from other people.

Intensity also can be regulated by variations such as allotted time, exacting requirements, and specifically prescribed tasks. Competition can intensify a situation and lead to the discovery of previously unnoticed abilities. However, for configurational learning to occur, the situation typically needs to be structured so that a person experiences the competition from both sides, that is, competes against himself or herself.

If exploration seems stuck, pausing to experience the nature of “being stuck” often can intensify what is imperceptibly happening and allow a new configuration to emerge. Exaggeration can also intensify concepts: what is the worst that could occur? the best? Such expectations may provide a missing insight into what is going on and may bracket the situation and make it less threatening and easier to explore.

SUGGESTIONS FOR DIRECTING ATTENTION

Many different dimensions may be worth exploring to see what configurational learning they offer. Some may be useful in one situation, some in another. Testing for fit is one way to determine which suggestions may be useful. If a suggestion doesn’t fit or capture interest, it is better dropped “for now.”

Explore Gaps and Blockages

A Buddhist saying goes “The use of a cup is in its emptiness.” Intentionally experiencing what is missing, what is left unsaid, or what needs to be there but is not can bring an experience into focus. Sometimes what is missing is obvious. Carl Rogers (1961) refers to incongruent communications in which the “lines” and their delivery do not jibe. A clenched fist accompanying an evenly modulated tone suggests that something is being held back. The speaker can be urged to say the words that the clenched fist suggests, then to select a body posture that better fits the words that were used and test for fit.

Merely calling attention to an experienced gap or deliberately acting out the gap can often suggest directions for exploration or spark insight. Paying particular attention to the color or shape of the gap typically sparks fruitful awareness. Not knowing which

way to go also can be viewed as a gap to be acted out or experienced more fully, permitting productive exploration to continue.

Typically, a blockage is seen as something to be avoided, removed, overcome, or demolished. What we fail to acknowledge is that the blockage is an integral part of and essential to the situation. Without the evil dragon to slay, Sir Lancelot could not “do his thing.” The blockage has something to offer—specifically, material for a new configuration, usually energy or power that has been locked into an unusable form and has sapped the situation of its vitality and potential. If avoiding or otherwise circumventing the blockage proves futile, it is often useful to confront it directly, to appreciate its essential contribution to the situation, and thus to assimilate its power and energy.

For example, it is not uncommon for an established institution to discover that in its single-minded efforts to block the progress of competitors it has itself become ineffective and needs to assimilate the vitality of this adversary in order to once again become viable. If people list their ten most valuable assets in order of priority and list separately the ten things they desire most, they often discover that their most valuable assets must be risked in order to accomplish what they desire most. The unwillingness to risk an asset represents a blockage. Continued scrutiny of one’s feelings results in an awareness of blockages; when possible, the blockage can be acted out or the person can engage in an imaginary dialogue with it. Invariably the blockage is useful to explore for insight, although if a person is not ready to engage the blockage so directly, more peripheral tactics can be used.

Frequently, the gap is of a different order or a different system of logic, an apparent discontinuity. In group dynamics, if the pursuit of the subject matter seems incoherent or circular, the facilitator often directs attention to what is termed the “group process,” those hidden or unacknowledged aspects of a group such as individual participant values, unexpressed desires or hidden agendas, assumed norms of group behavior, or cultural imperatives. A discussion of individuals’ perceptions of group process, alliances, or blocking behavior redirects attention by exploring the gaps between one set of perceptions and another. A more lively approach is for the group to mimic its own process. This can be done by continuing the meeting but talking in gibberish to direct attention to the “feeling” tone of the meeting. This approach typically sparks an awareness of new avenues for progress or of process issues that must be confronted and resolved. Sometimes, merely talking in gibberish is sufficient to heighten awareness, allow unfinished business to automatically be “finished for now,” and allow the meeting to proceed. For some kinds of situations, gaps can be identified by making an exhaustive listing of the variables that could be involved in a situation and their interrelationships. The list can be reviewed to determine which factors are most pertinent to the situation at hand and where gaps might occur.

Use Imagination and Fantasy

Tapping people's imaginative powers is another way to come up with a new configuration. By using metaphors one can see certain aspects of the situation in a new light and understand the relationships among the parts. Or one can act the part of an object or a process to gain insight into experience by noticing what thoughts or sensations impede progress. Dream scenes or case studies provide rich material for imaginary situations; these can be extremely valuable experiences as long as they are recognized as imaginary and not confused with the present situation. Supernatural characters are often a good vehicle to use: one can imagine gnomes or elves engaging the problem and then allow them to solve it. Imaginary journeys can also yield significant experiences. Stevens (1971) suggests journeys into a cave, an open field, a museum, or a pawn shop. In each case, it is important to experience the journey in the present tense and to notice what is happening, what is discovered, and how aspects of the journey interact. One could use active imagination to visualize what is over the hill in the picture on the wall (Jung, 1968) or imagine oneself or others as an animal, a food, etc.

Because fantasy suspends ordinary rules, one has complete freedom to imagine what he or she will. However, a person may continue to structure the situation in his or her current configuration. Thus, fantasy can be extremely useful to discover how the current situation is structured and what rules are imposed. Fantasy can also be a useful source for role plays or can be used to relieve tension. At a meeting, a fantasy break (e.g., "Imagine you are in a truly delightful place") is typically more effective and less time consuming than the ordinary coffee break.

Determine Policy Functions

Policy functions are the *rules* that guide all behavior—the equivalent of the parent ego state in transactional analysis. They determine the structure of situations and a certain efficiency of behavior. Many are self-imposed and often resist transformation. They often are evident in feelings and corresponding words, such as *I (you, we, etc.) should, ought, must, should not, ought not, etc.* Groups can play a "Ten Commandments" game by listing the ten unspoken commandments that govern behavior in the group. Statements should begin with "thou shalt" or "thou shalt not." A group can also imagine and act out what the situation would be if certain policies were modified.

Explore Energizing Functions

Paying attention to how the energy of each person and each facet of the situation is utilized is often critical to achieving insight. Fear and desire, expressed by "I'm afraid of . . ." or "I want . . .," are the basic indicators of energizing functions. They often represent a gap in insight. Energy trapped between "ought" and "want" or "want" and "afraid" is not available to actuate the situation. Exploring various sources of energy,

whether they seem productive or not, typically contributes to a clearer picture of the whole experience.

People's interest in power generally reflects their desire to capitalize on energy functions, though the situation is often seductively deceptive. The apparently weak or helpless person is frequently thought to have little power. Yet, in order to survive, the weak and helpless have to develop inordinate skill in attracting the power and energy of the apparently more powerful. Exploring the methods whereby the apparently weak attract energy to themselves can often be instructive. This exploration can take the form of "I or we defeat you by . . ." or any of the following: "I'm interested in . . .," "I demand . . .," "I appreciate . . .," "I want . . .," "I resent . . .," "I fear . . .," or "I frustrate you by . . ." Testing these for fit typically offers solid clues to the nature of the energy patterns in the situation.

Explore Integrating Functions

Sometimes configurational learning is facilitated by practicing one's natural integration or configuration-forming abilities. Introducing a third character with an explicit, integrating role, such as a consultant, into an imaginary dialogue can be useful. In organizations, special task groups or more permanent integrating groups that have ties to both sides of the situation are typically used to perform integrating functions. The consumer advocate and the production planning department are examples of such groups. Or the superordinate authority, the "boss," is called in to "get it together." Individuals in a group can act the part of an all-powerful king who can arbitrarily make things happen and integrate the situation.

Explore Opposites, Complements, Subtleties

Opposites define each other. Because what is important is made so by contrast to what is unimportant, opposites can be very effective new directions for attention. If an opposite is intentionally engaged, it can help clarify a configuration. A dialogue between one aspect of the situation and its opposite often brings clarity. In many configurations, certain facets may have been confused with their opposites. As it is commonly understood, "I hate you" can also mean "I love you"; "I want it" can mean "I don't want it," etc. Sometimes the speaker confuses his or her own motives or feelings with those of another. Saying "you are" often means "I am." Testing the opposites for fit in these circumstances can clarify just what is intended.

Subtle distinctions often are essential to understanding a configuration. Listing simultaneously what is the problem and what is not the problem typically highlights critical distinctions in feelings, senses, intuitions, ideas, situations—all of which are useful to pursue. When something does not "fit" but it seems that it should, exploring all subtle distinctions is required. At other times, having many possibilities can lead to confusion. Simplification is in order, and one needs to decide which distinctions seem useful.

Complements also can clarify the situation by filling a gap in the structure. Discovering what goes with or what helps clarify a structure can be helpful. Although the most obvious is precisely what is required, sometimes it is overlooked or people are too embarrassed to suggest it. Another way of finding complements is through wishes, “if only’s.” A person can act out the situation as if he or she, in fact, had the special quality desired. The person can discover how it works, whether it is required, and why it is required. Perhaps he or she will find out that a different complement is needed.

Explore Time and Space

Concepts of time and space can be extremely valuable for understanding the present. They are best engaged by seeing them as if they exist in the present. Ideas about the future or the past offer possible models for restructuring the present in such a way that insight can occur. Exploring the present as if it were in the unchangeable past or open-ended future often eases the threat of the present. On the other hand, the future could be seen as very threatening—especially if one’s expectations are negative—or as impossibly good. In either case, bringing the future into the present makes it more concrete, more possible to confront. This approach uses past experience to clarify concepts.

The same approach can be taken by placing the present situation in a different space—outer space or a specially defined space, for example, one without gravity or in the mountains or at sea, at home, at work, at a party. Each context offers different dimensions to explore present configurations.

Explore Processes and Relationships

Although this concept is very broad, it is too rich in possibilities to be overlooked. Sociocultural relationships are filled with experiences, special meanings, and possible connections with the current situation: parent-child, husband-wife, child-uncle (aunt), boss-employer, master-servant, friend-friend, doctor-patient, helper-client, artist-model, to name only a few. Testing alternate relationships in the current situation can yield insight. Such relationships can also suggest metaphors for relationships in the physical world: engine to wheels, supports to a bridge, electrons to protons, light to photographs, the sky to the sea, etc.

Processes are the structures upon which relationships are built: giving birth, growing up, formulating legislation, imploding and exploding, making war, refining petroleum, splitting atoms, baking bread, paying the bills, falling in love, forming a group, etc. These processes have the special property of structuring time as relationships structure space, and they bring out other qualities such as power, affection, etc. Graphics, pictures, and models are extremely valuable in communicating processes and can be used to great advantage by groups.

When exploring processes and relationships, it is extremely important to “do” them rather than merely talk about them, for they are susceptible to infinite abstraction,

discourse, and speculation and can be a way to flee from possibilities as well as a wonderful vehicle for discovering a new configuration.

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■ TRANSACTIONS IN THE CHANGE PROCESS

Thomas R. Harvey

The most phenomenal characteristic of change is the consistency of its process. Case descriptions and experiments abound that seek to assess the kind of conditions and transactions that occur when one person or group seeks to change another person or group. In most cases there is disagreement about what conditions account for effective and ineffective interpersonal change, but, although the ability of individuals to know and use given research and experience does vary, the transactions in the change processes do *not* vary markedly from individual to individual.¹

Don't Just Do Something . . .

The first and perhaps most important transaction to occur in the change process is that the advocate of change immediately begins to make the sale and “push” his product, doing the bulk of the talking. The ratio of the advocate’s talking time to the resister’s talking time is usually about four to one, with the resister’s talk generally being limited to direct responses. The advocate takes very little time early in the process to listen; instead he or she assumes that the success of his or her change effort depends on his or her pronounced and repeated talking.

This dynamic is equally true of group settings. For example, in a situation in which a group has to choose a course of action from a number of alternatives, each of which is preferred by some member of the group, each advocate in the group tends to argue for his or her own alternative. Advocates feel that the success of their efforts depends on their quickly asserting their interests, and they inappropriately assume that it is the declarative posture, not the listening posture, that is important. The successful advocate, however, tends to ask questions early and to listen attentively, in order to determine the needs, understanding, and concerns of the resister. Once this information has been obtained, the advocate can proceed to effect a change by using the knowledge in a systematic manner. The suggestion that results from this transaction is a reversal of the Oliver Wendell Holmes proscription: “Don’t just do something, stand there.” The advocate should not assume *a priori* that he or she knows what the other person’s needs

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¹ The consistency of transactions in the change process became clear over an eight-year period during which I used the activity “Buttermilk” (see the *Pfeiffer & Company Library*, Vol. 14, pp. 347–348) more than seventy-five times, and in all cases the results were almost exactly the same. In brief, in “Buttermilk” one person is asked to convince another person to drink buttermilk. The former is a lover of buttermilk, the latter a hater. When the attempted change process is completed, the buttermilk is poured from an unopened container, and it is blue.

are. His or her rush to effect a change may well result in the failure of the effort. Standing and listening before rushing off to say or do something is useful advice for the advocate.

Establish the Context

One of the intriguing transactions that occurs in this process of attempted change is that seldom does the advocate take time to establish a relationship with the resister or to control the environment of the change process. There may be varying seating patterns and obstructions purposely included in the experiment, but in 80 percent of the cases neither party does anything to change these conditions. People tend not to introduce, or reintroduce, themselves to one another; they tend not to discuss the artificiality of the activity; they tend not to move a chair that is awkwardly intervening between them. Even if the distance imposed by the chair upsets normal conversation patterns or the artificiality of the group setting makes participants feel like uncoached actors, they tend to ignore the environment. Instead, when told to begin, the advocate usually jumps right into the argument for drinking buttermilk or whatever other change is sought, and the resister listens.

It is equally true that in most organizational settings the full focus of attention is on the change process. The process is taken as the sole variate, while everything else is assumed to be constant. Nevertheless, the context, both physical and interpersonal, is critical for success and must be considered and constructed so as to be most productive to the particular change effort. One cannot assume that the context is automatically conducive to change; neither should one assume that the context is set and unalterable. One should be careful to assess whether apparent givens are true givens. Establishing and controlling the context are basic prerequisites to productive individual and group change.

Know the Impulse Base

When an advocate begins to assert the desirability of an intended change (such as drinking buttermilk), the arguments may be as varied as the individuals involved but they are consistent in one respect—they tend to reflect drives that are meaningful to the advocate: the buttermilk is low in calories or smooth to drink; people should try new things; buttermilk is rich and tasty; and the like. In most instances the resister then defends his or her stance by explaining why those are not very good reasons to drink the milk. Finally the advocate, in frustration at having effected little change, tries to determine why the resister dislikes it. In most successful efforts at change, the advocate asks questions that go beyond the resister's surface reaction to buttermilk, questions aimed at understanding what impulses motivate and energize the resister. When the advocate assumes that his or her impulse base is the same as another's, he or she is inadvertently preparing a potentially irrelevant change strategy. Instead, the advocate has to make a concerted effort to diagnose why the resister, be it an individual or a group, acts or does not act in some fashion. It is important not to assume but to assess

the impulse base of others. If the advocate determines what will prove to be cogent to another and remembers that it is not necessarily what is relevant to the advocate himself or herself, the strategy is more likely to be productive.

Know That Knowing Is Not Enough

The literature is replete with classification systems of change strategies, but perhaps the best is the Chin and Benne (1969) differentiation: rational-empirical, normative-reeducative, and power-coercive. The most favored strategy is typically the rational-empirical; e.g., buttermilk is low in carbohydrates; it is made through such and such a process; it is used as a basis for dressings and cakes; etc. The assumption is that if the advocate can provide the resister with appropriate data or information, he or she will change. The study-and-report approach described as being so ineffective by Ladd (1970) is a classic rational-empirical strategy. Individuals tend to rely on knowledge/data as a basis for change, while at the same time they themselves tend to be unmoved to change by others' data. This is not to deny the significance of information to change; it is only to acknowledge that knowing is not enough for effecting change. Other strategies and approaches have to be used in conjunction with information and knowledge. If one relies solely on rationality as a basis for effecting change, one is inappropriately and unduly limiting one's strategies. Yet a consistent transaction in change endeavors is that change advocates simply provide information and assume that it is sufficient. The ineffectiveness of the Surgeon General's reports on smoking is a clear example of this failure to effect change through information alone.

Make the Sale

One of the recurrent dilemmas for salespeople is to know when a customer is ready to buy. Repeated urging to buy before the customer is ready leads to a feeling of undue pressure; waiting too long before asking for the sale may lead to a missed opportunity, for the point of readiness can leave as quickly as it comes. Many sales management seminars are constructed around sensing when "to ask for the order." Similarly, in change efforts, the failure to sense when an individual is ready to "buy," to accept and integrate the desired change, is common. Learning to sense that point of openness (or unfreezing, in Lewinian terms) is an important aspect of change. Frohman (1970) is one particularly helpful and instructive example of some excellent literature in this area. A resister may say, "Well, I haven't tried buttermilk for a lot of years and I suspect it won't hurt me." Yet the advocate usually will not acknowledge this readiness, but will continue making assertions and statements until the point of openness has disappeared. It is important to remember that the sale must be made when the resister is ready, not when the advocate is ready. This transaction calls on the advocate to acquire an acute sense of timing and a sensitivity to the state of mind of his subject.

Expectations, Not Openness

Advocates make a concerted effort to open up resisters to the desirability of change, and when change does not happen, they blame the resisters' lack of openness. This interpretation, however, is a misunderstanding of the true dynamic that occurs. In the example, again, of drinking buttermilk, there are arguments for the importance of being open to fresh experiences, of examining the benefits of buttermilk, of not being blinded by old prejudices or expectations. Yet, when the carton is opened and blue buttermilk comes streaming out, the advocate himself is immediately repulsed by the milk and, normally, will not drink it. In perhaps only 10 to 15 percent of the cases will the advocate voluntarily drink the blue milk.

What has happened is that the advocate has one set of expectations and therefore feels at ease in demanding that another person accept them and change. It is not that the advocate is particularly open to change; it is merely that he is comfortable with the expected reality. When that reality, however, is altered, the advocate also becomes closed to change. It is easy to advocate change when one is comfortable with the expected reality but difficult to pursue that change when the expected reality is altered. Learning to understand change as a matter of expectations rather than of openness is crucial to effective change advocacy.

CONCLUSION

While the transactions in this particular experience are obviously not applicable to all change settings, they do illustrate the kinds of things that tend consistently to happen when one human tries to change another. In recognizing these, we can begin to understand how important diagnosis and evaluation are to change (Guba, 1968) and to sense how easy it is to be unsystematic about effecting change. Equally important, we can see how various taxonomies of change strategies (Chin & Benne, 1969; Havelock, 1970; Hornstein et al., 1971; Ladd, 1970) and precondition assessment (Frohman, 1970) can have relevance for a particular management situation. Finally, we can begin to see that the theory bases of change are critical to effective action, for they provide insights into the consistent transactions that occur. If theory and research are pertinent to the mundane circumstance of drinking buttermilk, they surely relate to corporate or university or church or hospital policy making.

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■ DEALING WITH ORGANIZATIONAL CRISES

Marshall Sashkin and John E. Jones

The term “management by exception” is not so common as it once was, but it is not totally unheard of today. It describes an approach by which managers are cued into action when a situation is identified as being outside the normal limits of tolerance. A manager becomes a sort of quality-control inspector, moving into high gear and taking direct action only when the product (or process) is unacceptable. (Of course, the manager does many other things as well, designed to prevent just such exceptions from occurring.)

A crisis is a particular, unusual type of exception. In our definition, *a crisis situation will lead to lasting negative consequences unless some immediate corrective action is taken*. One of the open-system principles defined by Katz and Kahn (1978) is “homeostasis,” the built-in tendency of all systems (people as well as organizations) to maintain a certain equilibrium state, which does not, however, exclude change. Thus, as children grow larger in a relatively standard way, conforming to a growth curve, so do organizations (see Greiner, 1972; Starbuck, 1965). For various reasons—illness, nutritional deficiencies, hormonal problems, and so on—a child’s growth may depart significantly from the norm, being either too slow or too fast. If the deviation becomes too great, correction is impossible, the system suffers irremediable damage, and the child becomes a midget or a giant. This can be called a crisis situation only if we refer to the condition during that brief period of time just before it is “too late.”

At such times, whether the crisis is medical or organizational, most people involved experience considerable stress, anxiety, and discomfort. The normal human response to such conditions is automatic physical preparation for “fight or flight” (Selye, 1974): The adrenal glands go to work, blood pressure rises; and these and other, more subtle physiological changes have a major psychological impact on the people in the crisis situation. A calm and rational approach is not typical, although such a reaction is the single most important means for effectively dealing with crisis.

In an organizational crisis situation, when the situational impact on the body as well as on the thought processes of the manager is usually negative, two forms of action will prove helpful: (1) controlling the physiological stress effects and (2) carefully following a problem-solving process. A variety of relaxation/stress-management approaches and techniques are easily accessible to anyone (see Adams, 1980; Benson, 1976; Mulry, 1976). Perhaps the simplest is the relaxation response (Benson, 1976), which is similar to the effect of meditation. More sophisticated techniques involve deep breathing and

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muscle relaxation. Most complex are the biofeedback approaches, which allow one to control more directly the previously automatic stress responses and to modify these responses. Only by counteracting the negative physical effects of stress can one proceed with effective problem solving.

TEN STEPS FOR EFFECTIVE CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Special attention should be given to the problem-solving process. The combination of human-relations process skills and good procedures is the best bet for effective crisis management. A helpful procedure, showing where skills are particularly important, is outlined here:

1. *Become calm.* As noted earlier, a person who is primarily under the influence of his or her own physiological stress mechanisms is in no condition to solve crisis problems. Thus, the very first step is to gain control over one's own functioning. For most of us this means consciously applying any of the common physiological stress-management techniques mentioned above. Doing this is relatively easy; the difficulty is becoming aware of the need to do it.

2. *Acknowledge the crisis.* Defense mechanisms, typically low in effectiveness, are particularly prone to lead to disaster in crisis situations. Denial and procrastination are especially dangerous. It is important to make public as early as possible the true extent of the crisis, in as much descriptive (nonjudgmental and nonanalytical) detail as is needed to give people a clear understanding of the situation. Those directly affected and those responsible for action should be informed. Panic is worse than loss of confidence; and because rumors spur panic, they should be squelched by clear, factual information. At the same time it is not useful to publish unnecessary details that would fuel a panic or to dispense information that reduces the ability to make action decisions by those who are responsible for dealing with the crisis. By alternately shouting warnings and then withdrawing and pretending nothing is wrong, one can create panic and make the crisis appear at least twice as bad as it really is.

3. *Accept ownership of the crisis problem.* This does not mean accepting the "blame," but rather the responsibility for corrective action. It is especially important that as many as possible of the people who have a role in solving the problem actually recognize the problem as theirs. "My" problems are always higher on my priority list than "your" problems. Thus, the more people who accept problem ownership, the faster, more powerful, and generally more effective will be the solutions. This is not to imply that the party or parties responsible for causing the crisis should go unnoted; those who cause a problem should be held responsible for their actions. However, judgment, justice, and blame are often not relevant for resolving a crisis. Blaming is another defense mechanism, at its worst called scapegoating (when innocent parties are blamed and efforts are directed against them instead of toward solving the problem). Aircraft pilots blame controllers and mechanical problems for a crash, controllers blame the

pilots' "human errors" and mechanical failures, and mechanics blame both the controllers and the pilots. None of this activity answers the question of what happened to cause the crash and how to prevent future crashes like it.

4. *Generate innovative solutions.* A crisis situation is, by definition, a "rare event." It may well take an equally rare type of solution to counteract the crisis. A variety of techniques can be used to raise the level of creativity (see Ulschak, 1979), including brainstorming, synectics, and other more formal techniques. Spending a lot of time considering conservative solutions is not useful; they are obvious and are not likely to be overlooked in any case.

5. *Assess costs and benefits of solution ideas.* This is a standard problem-solving step that is often omitted—even more dangerously in a crisis situation than in a normal problem situation. Naturally, time pressures are likely to make an extensive, comprehensive cost/benefit analysis impossible, but a "rough" idea of the cost/benefit ratio for each solution or action possibility is still a necessity.

6. *Take risks.* Once some rough comparative cost/benefit data are available, a rational choice can be made among action alternatives. At this point one must be careful not to be too cautious or conservative. In a crisis situation a risky action that could have great success is probably better than a low-risk course of action that would also be unlikely to have great positive impact. Although a less risky course may seem a natural choice, there are good reasons for choosing risk, especially when its extent is known and can be taken into account.

7. *Take actions designed to produce quick, visible results.* It is not reasonable to expect a crisis to be fully resolved very quickly, but it is necessary that some positive results be rapidly evident. This creates a cycle of optimism, a positive "self-fulfilling prophecy." Organizational members gain faith by knowing that something positive is being done, even if it is only a relatively small part of the long-range solution. Thus, one criterion for selecting a course of action is the likelihood that it will have immediate, visible impact.

8. *Plan for contingencies.* Some people are bound to say, "It won't work." This may cover them, should the action not work ("I was against it all along"), but it is also part of a vicious cycle of creating and then, purposefully or not, helping to fulfill negative expectations. To avoid this effect as much as possible, unrealistic expectations must not be created by touting the solution as the answer to all human/organizational problems. It must also be expected that there will be some problems in implementing actions and generating the desired effects, and minor and major contingency plans should be prepared. Minor contingency planning involves setting up correction plans for the problems—some known and to be expected, others unpredictable—that will inevitably arise. If there is a corrective process that can be put into effect as needed (such as a monitoring team, an automatic data report to certain people, and so on), then minor problems can be easily eliminated. A major contingency plan would be an alternate

action that could be implemented if and when the first plan is determined to be unsatisfactory. Contingency planning is the primary way to reduce the risk of the action solution.

9. *Develop a commitment to long-range development.* A crisis implies a basic rather than a superficial problem. Therefore, while immediate action and correction are the focus, it is also of great importance that a long-range problem-solving approach be seen as a commitment. Crisis solutions may treat only symptoms, an approach that is not necessarily bad unless deeper causes remain ignored. As people are often willing to promise a great deal in an emergency situation but renege on such promises when the immediate emergency is over, it is wise to have long-range commitments, including at least an outline of the development plan, made public, put into writing, and widely understood.

10. *Seek learnings.* Learnings from dealing with a crisis occur on two levels. First, one can learn to prevent similar crises or can, at least, have excellent action plans ready should similar situations occur. It is possible, also, to generalize these learnings in a variety of ways to other problem situations that are related to the crisis. A second and more difficult—but also more useful—type of learning concerns the crisis-management process. Crises are rare but inevitable, and a small reduction in pain and difficulty when the next one comes can mean a large increase in organizational adaptability and a significant decrease in costs. Unless someone purposely attends to this second type of learning during (not after) the crisis, it will not occur. This is a difficult task; but the payoff is high, whether the immediate crisis is effectively resolved or not.

PREVENTIVE OPTIONS

Few specific crises are predictable, yet there are some preventive actions that can be taken to reduce the probability of crisis or to increase the probability of effective crisis management:

1. Clarify organizational objectives in terms of major products and processes (ongoing activities); develop a picture (a chart or graph, for instance) of desired goal attainment, and analyze what range of deviations from the desired “track” the organization can tolerate or can deal with more or less automatically.
2. Identify “key communicators,” people who always know what is happening, who are part of or control crucial information flows in the organization; use these people to develop an early-warning system for crises that may occur in the future.
3. Define the five most likely crisis events and develop detailed contingency plans. Police departments have plans for riot control; hospitals develop similar plans for floods, fires, earthquakes, and so on.

- Identify key resource people for potential crisis situations; negotiate roles and responsibilities in advance.
 - Hold a “dress rehearsal” of crisis-response procedures for all parties likely to be involved in the crisis and its management.
4. Develop techniques and skills needed for effective crisis management and practice these in low-risk, noncrisis situations:
 - Relaxation techniques;
 - Confrontation skills; and
 - Problem-solving procedures.
 5. Develop a support system (Kirschenbaum & Glaser, 1978) for coping emotionally with ongoing crisis situations.

SUMMARY

A crisis situation calls for rapid comprehension of the problem and for quick, accurate communication. The following summary statements may be helpful:

- Crises require immediate action to prevent highly probable, lasting negative effects.
- Crises are normal and characteristic of organizational functioning.
- Crises are dangerous not only because of the obvious problems they involve but also because of the complex physical and psychological dynamics they provoke in human participants.
- There are preventive and preparatory actions one can take to reduce the likelihood of crises and to minimize potential negative effects.
- There are specific, learnable actions that can be taken to manage and resolve crises effectively.
- Crises can be productively considered as sources of energy for organization development.
- Coping is not developing.
- “You can’t cook without heat.”

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■ COPING WITH ANARCHY IN ORGANIZATIONS

Michael A. Berger

Any discussion on the management of change includes a claim of the universality of the change strategies across organizations. In most theoretical and empirical papers, the assumption is that all the change agent needs to do is apply the change strategy in the proper manner for constructive change to result. Although this may be true, organizational characteristics vary, and, consequently, the implications are different for the management of change.

THE RATIONAL MODEL

A rather simplistic theory, labeled the “rational model” of management (Cyert & March, 1963; March & Simon, 1958), underlies much of the discussion on the behavior of organizations:

1. It is possible to establish clear, prioritized goals.
2. The most effective means (technologies) to accomplish the goals can be selected.
3. Once the means are applied, the organization’s managers can evaluate whether successful goal achievement has occurred.
4. When problems occur, managers will make rational decisions on the way goals and/or the technologies should be modified to correct the gap between what is desired and what is occurring.

IMPLICATIONS FOR MANAGING CHANGE

Given these assumptions, it follows that change agents should direct their energies toward facilitating the establishment of clear, prioritized goals. Presumably, an MBO strategy would be helpful (Thomson, 1972). However, sometimes the goals of the organization are relatively clear, but the commitment of the organization’s participants is problematic. In these cases, change strategies such as rational-empirical, normative-reeducative, and power-coercive (Chin & Benne, 1969) may be appropriate.

In practical terms, the fundamental objective of these change strategies is to find goals and/or means that can be evaluated easily and to which the participants can commit themselves. It is assumed that if relevant information is gathered to define the problem properly and if the resistance of recalcitrant parties is overcome, then a decision

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can be made that will correct any problems. In this view, a fairly stable group of decision makers who agree on goals and technology is managing change.

THE ORGANIZED ANARCHY MODEL

In contrast, some organizations do not exhibit the close link between goals and means, the ease in evaluation, or the stability of decision makers assumed in the rational model. Known as organized anarchies (Cohen & March, 1975; March & Olsen, 1976), these organizations are characterized by ambiguous goals, unclear and contested technologies, strong norms against evaluation, and unstable participation by decision makers.¹

In organized anarchies, the measurable goals are not widely accepted; if the goal priorities *are* accepted, they are usually not operational (for example, “quality health care”). Technologies in these types of organizations are also turbulent. Either the technology is constantly changing—as in the shift in mental health treatment from milieu therapy to behavioral therapy to drug therapy—or the technology is strongly contested within the management group.

Evaluation of outcomes is also difficult in anarchic organizations. Professionals typically resist administrative scrutiny of their performance, saying that professionals alone must evaluate performance. Even if evaluation were possible, it is unclear what would be evaluated. There simply is no rational way to evaluate the degree to which such goals as quality health care have been realized. Decisions on anything except political considerations are extremely rare, although those involved may think that their choices are made on a rational basis.

The process of decision making also varies in anarchic organizations. It is assumed that people inside and outside the organization have limited time and energy resources for most of the issues. Often, solutions vaguely resemble the problems that spawned them; decision makers come and go (March calls it “fluid participation”); and issues keep resurfacing. Under these conditions, decision making resembles a “garbage-can process” in which loosely coupled components such as problems, solutions looking for problems, participants, and choice opportunities are mixed together in a less than rational manner (March & Olsen, 1976).

IMPLICATIONS FOR MANAGING CHANGE

It is apparent that change in organized anarchies does not come from a group of managers that makes decisions in a rational fashion but from various factions that make choices based only partially on rational criteria. The following tactics may be useful under these highly complex circumstances (Baldrige, 1975).

¹ March and his colleagues conceived the notion of organized anarchies to describe educational organizations. Their description, however, can be generalized to all human service organizations with a professionalized component, for example, hospitals, community mental health centers, correctional institutions, and social welfare agencies.

1. *Concentrate Efforts*. Because people in organized anarchies do not care about most issues and tend to wander in and out of the decision-making process, the change agent may have a greater chance of success if he or she focuses on one or two critical problems.

2. *Learn the History*. The wise change agent attempts to learn when the issue came up previously, who took what position, who won, and who lost. He or she also weighs carefully whether the time is right to make a fight for the issue or whether to wait until the issue comes up again.

3. *Build a Coalition*. Because the anarchic theory assumes the presence of powerful internal and external constituencies who can apply pressure to the decision-making process, the wise change agent mobilizes the support of these various elements to help influence the “garbage-can” processes.

4. *Use the Formal and Informal Systems*. Committee membership, doing one’s homework, and being ready to “fill the garbage can” with distracting issues are all viable change strategies, but the model also emphasizes the use of the informal system. For example, a committee will often simply ratify what has already been agreed to informally (Goffman, 1959). Bargains among professionals are often facilitated not by “face-to-face” confrontations, as some rational change strategies suggest (Harrison, 1972), but in the “face-saving” processes of informal discussions and mediation. Furthermore, these are instances when change can take place informally with no formal action at all. Managers simply agree on a new set of understandings and operate as if these were formalized into the system.

CONCLUSION

Although these change strategies are not exhaustive and may not be appropriate in all settings, they do illustrate that the management of change varies depending on the character of the organization. This insight is not new, but in reaffirming our understanding of these differences, we not only specify how organizations differ, we also sharpen our understanding of the various tools needed to manage change. We cannot assume that our favorite change strategies have universal application.

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■ CONSIDERATIONS FOR MANAGERS IN IMPLEMENTING CHANGE

Patrick Doyle

Managers generally are expected to implement organizational changes with a minimum of disruption to the work process. Obviously, it can be more difficult to introduce changes that originate outside a system, but there are certain considerations that can help the manager to facilitate any change process. These considerations require the manager to anticipate and plan for the responses of subordinates and others who will be involved in implementing the change.

Before introducing a change to subordinates, the manager should:

1. Be clear about the *objectives* of the change.
2. Determine the likely *impact* of the change on the organizational unit.
3. Determine *who* in the operational unit will be affected by the change, how, and to what degree.
4. Try to predict the *reactions* of people who will be affected by or called on to implement the change.

Once these things are done, the manager can plan how to introduce the change. At this point, the manager begins to add to his or her data about what can be done to facilitate the change and who can be relied on to support it.

EXPLAIN THE CHANGE IN TERMS OF OBJECTIVES AND IMPACT

A manager who works in an organization that uses management by objectives (MBO) or management by results (MBR) can use the stated objectives to explain the logic and/or impetus for the change. It is even better if the manager can describe the specific impact of the change on his or her area of responsibility and subordinates. Generally the process is first to delineate the specific *objective* that will cause the change, then to describe the *results* that the change is expected to produce. The manager should then describe the *impact* that the change will have on the work unit or department.

This approach is considerably weakened if the manager describes the objective or change as something beyond his or her control and outside his or her interest. Those

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being introduced to the change then perceive the manager as weak or uncommitted and the objective itself as undesirable, unreasonable, or unattainable.

Managers who must introduce changes without specifically stated objectives still can exercise some practical approaches to facilitate the process. The manager can list the anticipated benefits of the change to the organization and/or to the work areas in which it will be implemented. Then the manager should delineate as specifically as possible the change to be made.

ANTICIPATE HOW PEOPLE WILL BE AFFECTED BY THE CHANGE

Obviously, the more objective the manager can be about the benefits, the easier will be future modifications of the change and the more obvious will be the criteria for judging the success or failure of the change. It is not always possible for the manager to do this *openly*. Changes range from those that clearly are dictated by the goals and procedures of the organization to those that are purely political or needed to “put out fires.” If staff members, particularly the manager’s subordinates, have participated in requesting or defining the change, the manager’s task is likely to be easier. Similarly, if there appear to be options, the announcement of change may have less negative impact. If the initiation of change is a “top-down” approach, subordinates are likely to feel (perhaps accurately) that it is *imposed* on them, and their responses to the initiation of change, as well as to the substance of the change, must be taken into consideration.

The manager also will want to identify the individuals on whom the change will have the most impact. Prior to meeting with staff members, the manager should plan his or her presentation and try to anticipate staff reactions to the announced changes.

Predicting Individual Reactions

The work of Anthony Downs (1967) and Louis R. Pondy (1967) can help managers to estimate the level and extent of reactions that will be generated in response to changes.

Downs illustrated the concept of territorial sensitivity. He referred to a focal area (an office, work unit, department, etc.) as a bureau. For our purposes, a focal area also could include the job role from the perspective of the role occupant. According to Downs, a bureau has territorial sensitivity, and this sensitivity is dependent on the bureau’s perception of its degree of control over a particular territory (see Figure 1).

The “heartland” is the area in which the bureau perceives itself as having total or sole control. At the “interior fringe,” the bureau has dominant (but not sole) control. In the area of “nowhere land,” several bureaus may share influence. In the “periphery,” the bureau may have some influence but is not dominant, and in the “alien territory,” the bureau has no influence at all.

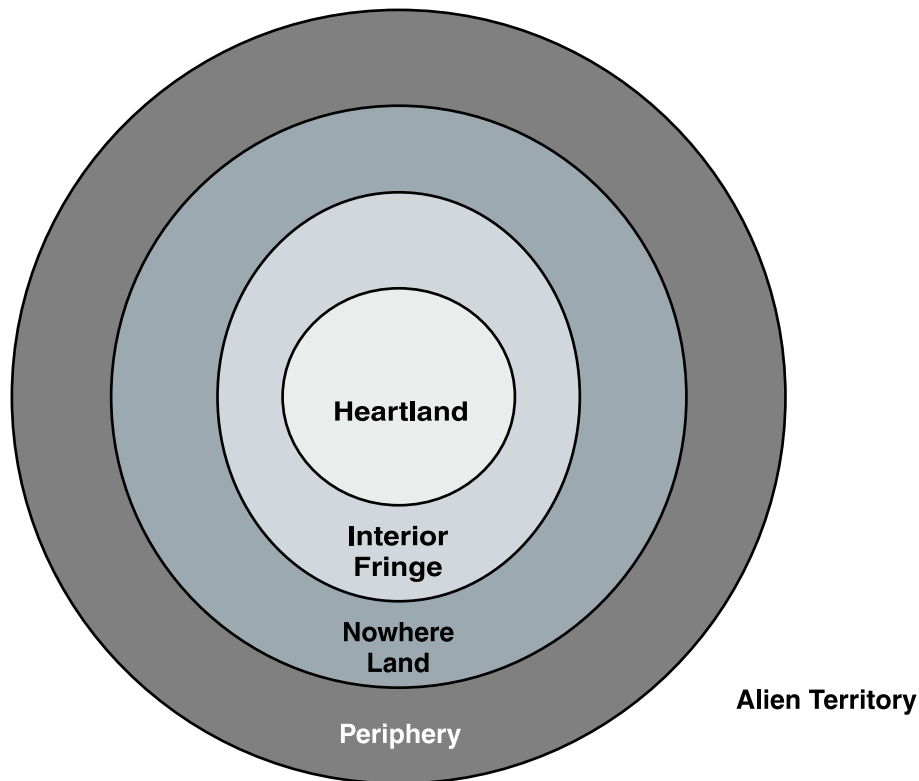


Figure 1. Downs' Concept of Territorial Sensitivity

When we apply Downs' concept to a management situation, we are concerned not only with bureaus as reporting areas but also with the job or group-member roles that individuals perceive for themselves. Usually, when we make a change that intrudes into another person's heartland or periphery, we do so unintentionally. An example of such intrusion would be discussing what has happened in the past without referring to the department's older members. These unintentional intrusions cause most of the difficulties in successfully managing change.

Downs' work suggests that managers should concern themselves not only with the individuals whom the change will impact but also with those individuals' perceptions of the change in terms of their individual areas.

Pondy (1967) offers a way to consider the extent or intensity of the response to change. He delineated five levels or stages of conflict. The first of these is "latent" conflict. Latent conflict exists because there are conditions in the working environment that can create conflict. An example of this is the fact that managers frequently must compete for scarce resources. Although there is a potential for conflict in the situation, conflict itself will not arise until a demand for limited resources actually is made.

The second stage is "perceived" conflict. At this stage, it is recognized that conflict exists (although, as Pondy states, conflict may be perceived when no conditions of latent conflict exist).

In the third stage, “felt” conflict, the conflict becomes personalized. Hostile feelings may accumulate.

In the next stage, “manifested” conflict, these feelings may become obvious. The conflict is demonstrated through the behaviors of those involved. Demonstrated behaviors can include arguments, lack of contact, or even overt contact with covert intentions.

The final stage of conflict is “aftermath.” Pondy refers to this stage as the legacy of a conflict episode. Managers who tend to “smooth over” or suppress conflict will find that the legacy of a conflict situation is much like “latent” conflict; it still has the potential to explode at any time.

The implication of these analyses is that managers can predict that, in most cases, the most violent (demonstrable) reactions to change will come from those who perceive that their areas of control, their heartlands, are being violated. Finally, an individual’s response to change is highly dependent on the individual’s or area’s predisposition to change.

A TECHNIQUE FOR ASSESSING THE SUCCESS POTENTIAL OF PROPOSED CHANGES

Managers may be asked to assess the probability of success of proposed changes before they are announced or implemented. The considerations described previously in this paper will help managers to make such assessments. With the available information on impact of and possible reactions to a change, a manager can use a technique that is based on several of the principles of zero-based budgeting (Cheek, 1977). This technique involves a subjective judgment on the part of the manager—an estimate of his or her ability to manage the change. When managers are involved in several changes, they can assign a point count to each change, based on the following concept.

In a stable situation, and assuming a relatively efficient operation, managers imagine that they have only a fixed amount of effort, ability (skills), and time to contribute to the successful implementation of any change and that this amount is equal to one hundred points. The managers assign a point count to each individual change that they are required to manage. The managers then rank the changes in order of the greatest benefit to the work area or organization (whichever is most appropriate) and add up the total point count for each change. Any change that would result in the manager’s exceeding the one hundred points could be considered as having a low probability of achieving success.

Under the guidelines for this system for evaluating change, managers should not list points for acceding to or implementing changes requested by subordinates, because such changes are viewed as part of the managers’ normal, ongoing, managerial functions.

A manager must accept some limitations on the amount of change that he or she can control. The point-allocation technique helps the manager to plan for the amount of

change that he or she can monitor successfully. The *analysis* of the point-allocation process and the objective approach then become identical.

AN EXAMPLE

The operations auditor in a retail organization was attempting to implement a staffing plan that would make more efficient use of wage/sales dollars. The company no longer wished to use the “sales commission” approach as the sole determinant of a salesperson’s salary.

The operations auditor wanted to introduce a system that ranked the salespeople for each department in order of their net contribution to the area’s profitability. He knew that the situation was volatile and decided to determine where the major impact would be felt and to try to predict the reaction with which he would have to deal.

The basic objective was clearly delineated: the store was to reduce its wages-to-sales ratio from 8.1 percent of sales to 7.8 percent. A key change would be a computerized reporting system that would track the performance of individual salespeople. Whether the new approach would succeed or fail rested on the cooperation of the sales managers for the individual areas. The new program would significantly change the ways in which they would plan their staff levels and the schedules of specific salespeople in their areas. (Resources such as the required computer time and the availability of a programmer to design the program were not a problem in this case.)

Although he had the authority to legislate the change, the auditor had elected to use a strategy of cooperative effort between the sales-management group and the auditing group. The major benefit of this approach was realized in the analysis of where the change would fall or be felt the most (see Figure 2).

Initially, only the roles/bureaus of the auditor and the individual sales managers were considered. The role of the computer programmer was added later because the design of the program used would be considered part of her heartland (see Figure 3).

The operations auditor then analyzed the proposed change and came to the following conclusions:

The Role of the Sales Manager

Heartland: Sales managers generally are possessive about their staffs. The sales staffs represent their span of control and power. The staff members play the necessary role of followers to the sales manager’s role of leader.

Implication: If the change did not ostensibly respect the sanctity of the relationship between the sales managers and their appropriate staffs, the auditor could expect immediate and visible reactions against the proposal.

Objective #1		Area: Wage/Sales Dollars
Description: Reduction of the wage-to-sales percentage from 8.1% to 7.8%		
Influence Change for the Department	Individual Most Affected	Strategy/Resources for Managing Change
Introduction of a computerized reporting system tracking individual sales performance	Individual sales managers	Resources: programmers, computer resources available Strategy: co-op design project between sales management and auditing group

Figure 2. Identification of Areas of Impact of Proposed Change

Employee/Role	Bureau/Area			
	Heartland	Interior Fringe	Nowhere Land	Periphery
Sales Manager	Scheduling of "my" staff—Leader role	Wages/sales ratio	Control of the application of the program	Company's objectives on staffing
Operations Auditor	Company's objectives on staffing	Key-department performances	Scheduling of staff	
Computer Programmer	Design of the computer program	Control of the operation of the program	Application of the program	

Figure 3. Identification of Territorial Consideration Related to Proposed Change

Interior Fringe: Each sales manager had the majority of input about the required wage-to-sales ratio for his or her area, but not entirely about what level the percentage would be. The auditor also had input about what an appropriate ratio (wage percentage) would be.

Implication: The auditor maintained that legislating a fixed rate would result in the sales managers' blaming the auditor for any shortcomings in the new approach. Reductions in wage/sales ratios could be implemented once the program had proven its worth.

The auditor wrote out his analysis (Figures 2 and 3) to take into consideration each area that the change would impact and then designed his approach to accommodate the situation where feasible. A relevant point that the auditor had not considered originally but which the documentation brought to light was the consideration of the programmer's heartland. It became apparent that the programmer must accept that the staffing decisions would come from the salesmanagement group and not from a formula that

could be built into the model. It was important for the salesmanagement group to respect the design considerations of the programmer and to understand that the programmer could function only in ratio to the cooperation and level of information offered by the sales group.

Although disagreements did arise during the implementation phase, the auditor believed that the ultimate success of the change was due substantially to the respect established for the territorial considerations (not necessarily the expertise) of those involved (managers and programmer).

CONCLUSION

The prospect of change is frightening to many people, whether realistically or not. This fear of change often produces disruptions in organizations when change is anticipated or announced. If managers do not adequately anticipate or plan for the responses of their subordinates to a contemplated change, the change may be far more disruptive than is necessary.

This article has presented a model for managers to use in reducing and managing the disruption caused by subordinates' reactions to planned change. As the example of the application of the model demonstrates, the techniques presented here can be learned and used by managers in their day-to-day work, much of which involves the management of change.

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■ FUNCTIONAL ROLES FOR FACILITATING ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

Myron R. Chartier

The Greek philosopher Heraclitus said, “There is nothing permanent except change.” Change is an even greater reality in contemporary life; it is occurring at an accelerated pace, and the human nervous system has difficulty accepting the rate of change that exists in Western culture (Toffler, 1970).

Given the impact of technology on the modern world, the likelihood of slowing the pace of change is almost nonexistent. The challenge for today’s managers is to learn to manage change. According to Odiorne (1981), “There is no way we can learn to adapt to change without learning how to manage it” (p. x). This implies a need for *management by anticipation*, in contrast to unplanned, unmanaged, chaotic change.

CHANGE BY SIMPLE REFLEX

Much change in organizational systems occurs as a response to disturbances from within or outside the organization. Havelock (1973) calls the most simple response to a disturbance “change by simple reflex,” for it is “problem-solving” of the reflexive, trial-and-error variety (see Figure 1). An internal or external stimulus leads to a response: in a teachers’ strike, the school board fires the teachers or gives in to their demands; if a pastor criticizes the moral conduct of the church’s leading elders, the elders demand the pastor’s resignation. Such an approach to problem-solving often produces chaotic change because it is unplanned and unmanaged.

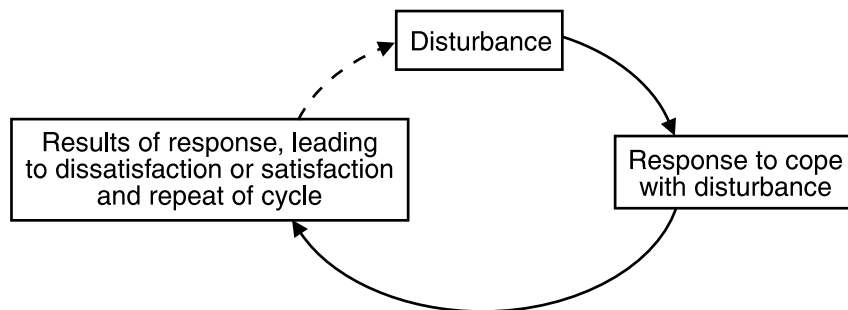


Figure 1. Change by Simple Reflex

Originally published in *The 1972 Annual Handbook for Group Facilitators* by J. William Pfeiffer and John E. Jones (Eds.), San Diego, CA: Pfeiffer & Company.

CHANGE BY RATIONAL PROBLEM SOLVING

An initial organizational disturbance also is the impetus in planned, rational problem solving, but the response is divided into five steps:

1. Feeling a need and deciding to do something about it;
2. Actively attempting to define the problem;
3. Searching for promising solutions;
4. Applying one or more promising solutions to the need;
5. Determining whether the problem is solved satisfactorily; repeating the problem-solving cycle if it is not.

This problem-solving cycle is illustrated in Figure 2.

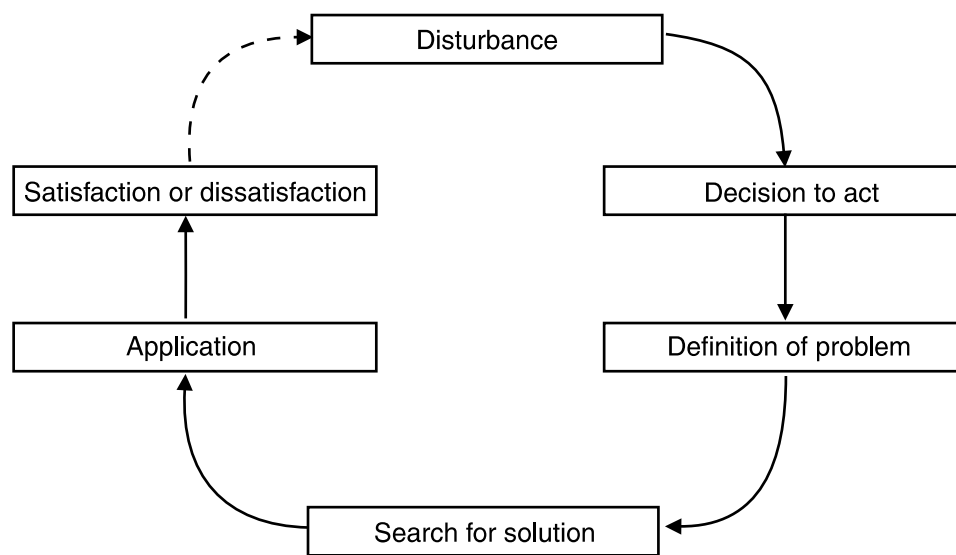


Figure 2. Change by Rational Problem Solving

THE ROLES OF THE CHANGE AGENT

The process of change may be implemented by top administrators, staff members, or outside consultants or agents. No matter who a change agent is, there are five primary modes through which he or she can relate to the change process.

1. As a catalyzer;
2. As a process helper;
3. As a solution giver;
4. As a resource linker; and
5. As a stabilizer.

These five primary modes provide functional roles for facilitating organizational change (see Figure 3). When the five change-agent roles also are functionally related to the problem-solving process, the result is a dynamic process for effectively accomplishing change within an organization.

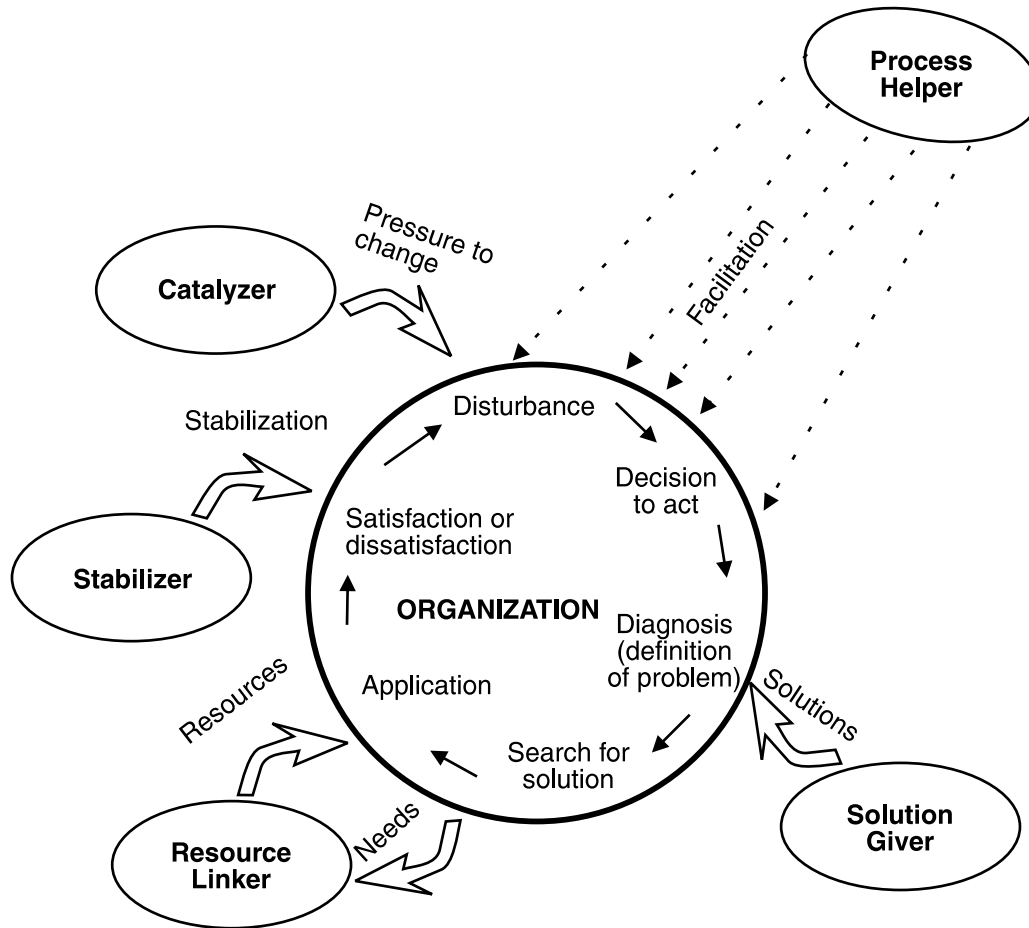


Figure 3. Five Roles of Change Agents

The Change Agent as Catalyzer

It is not unusual for people to resist change and to want to keep things as they are. Odiorne (1981) declares, “The best minds of our society often seem bent upon criticism and resistance rather than creation and innovation” (p. ix). For this reason, change agents are needed to overcome inertia, to prod organizations to be less complacent, and to activate initial work on serious problems.

Change agents, whether from inside or outside the organization, are dissatisfied with the status quo. By challenging the usual way of doing things, these catalytic protagonists energize an organization to come to terms with its problems. Most importantly, they draw attention to the need for change. Many civil rights leaders in the

1960s used social protest as a means to draw attention to the need for change in policies regarding African-Americans. A research-based person might use statistics to point out a need for change.

One person tried to get his small educational institution interested in using microcomputers, but none of the administrators were particularly interested. So he took departmental monies, purchased an inexpensive computer, and allowed various people to use it. A year later, several members of the faculty had purchased their own computers, and the school itself had purchased two microcomputers and was designing major computer services for the library. Indirectly, this person had been a catalyzer.

The Change Agent as Process Helper

A critical, yet often neglected, functional role is that of helper in the processes of problem solving and innovation. The process helper is knowledgeable in how to facilitate change in individuals and organizations. Because organizations often lack this expertise, the process helper can contribute a valuable service by showing the organization how to:

1. Recognize and define needs;
2. Analyze problems and set goals;
3. Obtain needed resources;
4. Generate a range of solutions, adapt them to organizational problems, and install the solutions; and
5. Evaluate the solutions to determine whether they are meeting organizational needs.

These facilitative steps have been developed by Havelock (1973).

Process helpers utilize problem-solving skills in order to facilitate change. For example, a leader of a local lodge was concerned that not enough people were being recruited to fill its positions of leadership. He called the existing leadership together to discuss the problem. As they began to analyze the problem, they discovered that they had experienced a steady decline in membership, primarily because of changes in the community. The leadership structure called for by the lodge's constitution was appropriate for a much larger membership. The leaders changed the organization's constitution to fit a smaller membership and found that they did have enough people to meet their leadership needs.

The Change Agent as Solution Giver

Many change agents have definitive ideas about what changes should occur. Being an effective solution giver, however, entails more than generating a solution. It also involves a sense of timing and effective communication to create awareness of the solution's value and to gain its ultimate acceptance.

The change agent as solution giver also must know enough about the proposed solution to be able to assist the organization in adapting it to its requirements. For example, a county agent's office was concerned about its future because the county had become increasingly urban and farming in the area had declined. The county agent had heard about a new program sponsored by the Cooperative Extension Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The program was called "Family Strengths." The agent thought that this program could be important in helping people in the county adjust to present and future changes. Because she knew that others might not agree, she began to talk about the program and shared informative literature with her colleagues. Gradually, others became interested and began to think that the new program could provide the county agent's office with a new impetus. Eventually, the program was adopted.

The Change Agent as Resource Linker

Effective problem solving requires the interlinking of needs to resources. Resources may be of many kinds: money or means to money; special knowledge; skill in analyzing problems; knowledge of solutions; the ability to formulate, adapt, and adopt solutions; or expertise in the process of change. People are a major resource for time, energy, motivation, skills, and other expertise. The change agent as resource linker often is undervalued in organizations. However, the person who is able to bring people together and who helps the organization to discover and make optimum use of resources inside and outside the organization plays a very special role in facilitating effective change.

As an example, the dean of a faculty was concerned that many of her faculty members were not having articles published in journals in the field. When she talked to various members of the faculty, she learned that although many of them had written articles, they did not know where or how to submit the articles for publication. She also discovered that one member of the faculty had a strong publishing record as well as considerable knowledge about a number of pertinent journals. The dean recruited this professor to be a resource linker, to help other faculty members to contact journals and to assist with the preparation of articles to meet publication requirements.

The change-agent roles discussed so far are based on the work of Havelock (1973). However, for the change process to be defined completely, one last change-agent role should be identified.

The Change Agent as Stabilizer

Because of the emphasis on promoting change and reducing resistance to change, less attention has been paid to the organization's need for stability, especially after a successful change process. Broskowski, Mermis, and Khajavi (1975) indicate that a more complete recognition is needed of the dynamic interplay between change and stability for successful growth to occur. When change has been effected, a new set of behaviors or mechanisms is required to stabilize that change. This is the function of the stabilizer, who can show the organization how to:

1. Build and maintain organizational boundaries;
2. Build interdependency and cohesiveness on all sides of the organizational change;
3. Provide a stable and continuous link with other organizations in its social environment; and
4. Avoid growing so fast that it discards elements that are fundamental to its identity and purpose.

For example, in a small business firm in which several significant, new products had just been developed and marketed, the product manager saw the opportunity for another “top-of-the-line” product to be developed. The question was whether the company could develop another new product quickly and still maintain the quality for which it had been known. The manager decided to wait until quality control had been worked out on the most recently developed products. He also wanted to make sure that the recent innovations were successful before launching another new venture.

DEFINING ONE’S ROLE

People with various job titles inside or outside an organization may discover that they can perform one or more of the five functional roles for facilitating organizational change. In defining one’s own role, one should take the following points into consideration:

1. *The five roles of change agents are not mutually exclusive.* A change agent may be a catalyzer, process helper, solution giver, resource linker, and stabilizer all at the same time. Knowing how to be effective in one functional role can help a person to understand the others.

2. *A person from inside or outside the organization can be an effective change agent.* Sometimes “outsiders” see organizational dynamics more objectively, and they usually have more liberty to work in various ways with different individuals in the organization. However, “insiders” usually are more knowledgeable about the organization and identify more with its problems. An insider also is known to the members of the organization and, thus, often is perceived as being more trustworthy than an outsider.

3. *A change agent can be “line” or “staff.”* A person in a formal position of authority, such as a president or executive director, usually is most able to foster innovation in a system. According to Havelock (1973), “most research studies show that the administrator is the most important gatekeeper to change” (p. 10). The top administrator sets the tone, opens the doors, and supplies the psychological and material support, even when he or she is not the formal change agent. The more an administrator or manager knows about the change process, the better. On the other hand, a staff person may actually perform the functional role of facilitating the change. A staff person often

is perceived as less threatening than an administrator and, thus, may be able to intervene more directly.

4. *A competent change agent can work from above or below.* It is much more difficult to bring about change from below when one does not have formal power, but it can be accomplished. One must understand the processes of problem solving and change; the points of leverage within the organization; the most effective and efficient channels for clear, persuasive communication; and the best time, places, and circumstances for executing change (Havelock, 1973).

5. *An effective change agent establishes clear expectations.* This is especially true when the change agent is operating in a consultant-client relationship. It is important that agreement be reached concerning what roles the consultant is expected to play, in order to clarify the expectations of both parties and to facilitate clear communication and productive change. “Every relationship is based upon expectations” (Blake & Mouton, 1976, p. 448). An agreement about expectations may be open ended so that new roles can be discussed as conditions call for them.

CONCLUSION

“Change is one of the facts of life in organizational behavior” (Herbert, 1981, p. 341). Effectively managed change is important to the well-being of both individual and organizational systems. Change is most likely to be beneficial when it is based on a rational process of problem solving. The change agent relates to this process in five functional ways, and all five are needed to bring about satisfactory solutions to organizational disturbances.

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■ INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF PLANNED ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE: A MODEL AND REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Paul F. Buller, Borje O. Saxberg, and Howard L. Smith

Most organizations introduce change for a variety of reasons: to improve the organization's overall effectiveness, to respond to a changing environment, to begin a new venture, or to create preparedness for the future. Whatever the reason, change efforts often are *improvised* by managers who have the responsibility for improving the people, processes, structures, technology, or strategic position of the organization. As a result, difficulties may be experienced in implementing planned change and in generating acceptance of the change so that it becomes institutionalized. Managers responsible for planning and implementing organizational changes would benefit from a more thorough understanding and *systematic application* of the process by which changes are accepted and become a permanent part of the organization.

The model presented here is based on the recent organizational change literature, particularly the work of Goodman, Bazerman, and Conlon (1980).

THE PROCESS OF INSTITUTIONALIZATION

Goodman et al. (1980) define institutionalization as a process involving specific acts and behaviors:

An institutionalized act is defined as a behavior that persists over time, is performed by two or more individuals in response to a common stimulus, and exists as a social fact. (p. 5)

These authors note that institutionalized acts vary in the extent to which they are accepted as a social fact, are performed by the organization's members, and persist. Obviously, an organizational change that has been adopted by an entire company and has been in place for thirty years is more of an institution than a change that has been adopted in one department and has been in place for only a year. Truly institutionalized acts are transmitted across generations of organizational members.

Theoretical Foundations

Three points provide a theoretical foundation for the model of institutionalization. First, the model is based on the dynamics of resistance to change because of the potential

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threats, fears, and insecurities that change precipitates. Zander (1961), Mann and Neff (1961), and Beer (1980), among others, have identified several sources of resistance: (a) lack of clarity about the nature of the change (what and why?); (b) perceived threats to job security; (c) perceived or actual loss of self-esteem, rewards, control, power, competence, or relationships as a result of the change; (d) lack of opportunities to participate in planning for the change; and (e) demand for new behaviors that are incongruent with established individual and/or group norms (Is the change different from the way we do things in this organization?). These sources of resistance must be understood and actively addressed by managers if the changes they seek to implement are to be successful in the long run.

Second, the model of institutionalization is founded in systems theory (Beer, 1976; French & Bell, 1978; Huse, 1975; Kotter, 1978). Under a systems approach, the introduction of change into an organization is an information input which, through a process of transformation, leads to some output. Systems theory suggests that planned change in an organization can impact many parts of the organization in addition to the part targeted for the change. For example, a recent team-building intervention in a mining company (Bell, 1982) produced a number of changes at different levels of the organization. Long-range goals and strategies were developed at the top-management level; organizational structure was modified, and roles and responsibilities were clarified at the corporate operations level; an absenteeism policy was introduced, and logistical problems were solved at the mine management level; and communications between shifts as well as some working conditions were improved at the hourly employee level. Thus, the team-building program (input) altered a number of processes and resulted in improvements in several areas (outputs).

Third, the model of institutionalization includes the three phases of the change process, as identified by Lewin (1947): unfreezing, moving (or changing), and refreezing. Unfreezing involves making the need for change obvious enough so that the individual, group, or organization can accept it readily. Moving (or changing) involves replacing old values, attitudes, and/or behaviors with new ones. This often involves practice and reinforcement over time. Refreezing involves locking new behavioral patterns into place through the use of supporting mechanisms. This is particularly important if changes are to remain after the change agent leaves. It may include follow-up materials or programs to be administered by people internal to the organization.

Lewin's description of the change process emphasizes the importance of refreezing to increase the likelihood that some degree of "permanency" will occur. However, Lewin's conceptualization does not explain why unfreezing, moving, and refreezing do or do not occur. The model presented next identifies variables that can be critical in each of these phases.

Framework for a Model of the Institutionalization Process

Figure 1 illustrates a two-dimensional framework for the model of institutionalization. The first dimension, levels of analysis, includes the individual, the group, the

organization, and the environment. The second dimension, phases of the change process, includes the decision to adopt (unfreezing), the decision to continue (changing), and persistence (refreezing). In reality, however, the distinctions between these elements are not always so clear.

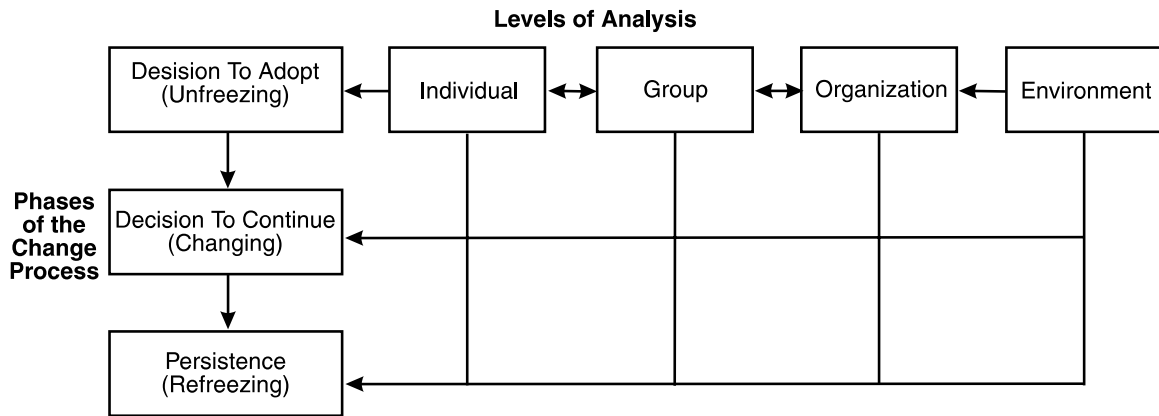


Figure 1. Framework of the Institutionalization Model

Unfreezing: The Decision To Adopt at the Individual Level

Some of the factors that are critical in an individual’s decision to adopt a change can be drawn from expectancy theory (Mitchell, 1974). The person’s perceived ability to perform the new work behavior, the relationship between the new behavior and rewards, and the value of those rewards all determine, in part, the person’s initial acceptance of the change.

One major source of resistance to change is feared or actual loss of ability to perform the new behavior (Beer, 1980; Hultman, 1979). Consequently, training and education often are integral parts of the initial, or unfreezing, phase of the change process. Another source of resistance to change is ambiguity about the meaning of the change. If the goals and required behavior of the change are unclear, individuals will wonder whether they are capable of adequate performance. Research has shown that such ambiguity can be alleviated through the participation of all employees targeted for the change (Beer & Davis, 1976; Coch & French, 1948; Fleishman, 1965).

In the classic study by Coch and French (1948), employee participation in planning production changes reduced resistance to the changes and increased performance. The researchers studied three groups: one group did not participate in planning changes, another group participated through worker representatives, and the third group participated directly. The first group resisted the changes that were made and showed a decrease in performance, the second group showed some improvement in performance, and the third group was the least resistant to the changes and showed dramatic improvements in performance.

A second source of resistance to change is the perceived relationship between the new behavior and resultant outcomes. It is unlikely that an individual will adopt a new behavior unless he or she has some expectation that the behavior will be rewarding. Research suggests that the success of a change program is partially related to an effective, clear link between new behaviors required by the change and various reinforcement measures. For example, Goodman's (1979) evaluation of the Rushton Mine experiment suggested that the autonomous work groups failed to become institutionalized partly because the workers did not perceive that rewards would result from adopting the changes.

The value of the outcomes to the individual is another important variable in the decision to adopt change. Expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964) indicates that an individual compares possible outcomes of various behavioral alternatives and then chooses the behavior that is most attractive in terms of outcomes. The level of attractiveness (valence) of any outcome is a function of the individual's own needs and the amount of available outcomes. The following example illustrates how this can be applied to the adoption of organizational change.

Suppose that an individual whose job is routine and boring places a high value on having a challenging job. A change is proposed that would increase the challenge and responsibility of the job. It is likely that the individual would be willing (assuming that he or she is able) to adopt the change. If the individual were to prefer simple, routine work without responsibility, he or she would be less willing to adopt the change. If increased pay accompanied the change, the individual might be more willing to accept the change, depending on how highly he or she valued money.

Another critical factor in the decision to adopt is the degree of congruence between an individual's existing values and beliefs and those associated with the change. If the change involves values that are too different from those of the individual, it is unlikely that the person will adopt the change voluntarily. Several organizational change efforts have failed for precisely this reason. For example, Crockett (1977) describes an attempt to introduce Theory-Y management into the U.S. Department of State, which is noted for having a bureaucratic, authoritarian culture. The change effort failed in part because management did not really want it; it was accustomed to the security of managing through authority, power, and fear.

The degree of trust that an individual has in the sponsor(s) of the change effort is a fifth factor in the decision to adopt change. If the initiator of the change is perceived as trustworthy and credible, it is more likely that the new behavior will be adopted (Mirvis & Berg, 1977).

Finally, pressure to change—from either an internal or external source—can be a critical factor in the decision to adopt new behavior (Guest, 1962; Seashore & Bowers, 1963). Beer (1980) states that a “fundamental reason that some crisis or pressure seems to be important in setting the stage for change is that it creates a state of readiness and motivation to change” (p. 48).

Influencing the above variables are three additional factors: (a) the extent of psychological *participation* in the change; (b) the extent of *information* the person has about the change; and (c) the person's *past experience* with change (Mann & Neff, 1961). There also is evidence to suggest that people in organizations are motivated to act on problems before they become crises if they are provided with information about those problems (Cammann, 1974; Lawler & Rhode, 1976).

Unfreezing: The Decision To Adopt at the Group Level

A person's decision to adopt a change usually is not made in isolation; it often occurs in the context of the immediate work group, and it appears that certain conditions at the group level affect the decision to adopt.

Goodman et al. (1980) emphasize that individuals must perceive that other members of their work group or relevant organizational unit are performing the new behavior (required by the change) if they are to adopt the change. Two situational factors affect these perceptions: the physical setting and the communication system of the work group. The physical setting affects the level of interaction and, hence, the visibility of those performing the behavior. If employees work in isolation, it is unlikely that the new behavior will be perceived as a social reality. An effective communication system may compensate for isolation by making everyone aware of the behavior of others in the work group. Underground miners, for example, typically spend much of the work day alone. Their isolation is compensated for to some degree by regular meetings of miners and supervisors before or after work shifts, by the use of a central bulletin board for communications, and by performance feedback by means of publicly displayed charts and graphs. These mechanisms provide an opportunity for miners to learn what their coworkers are doing in terms of organizational changes.

The consensus of values and beliefs in the group is another important factor. If the work group judges the new behavior to be congruent with existing practices and norms, the group is more likely to deem it appropriate and, therefore, acceptable. Not everyone in the group has to support change for it to be adopted. Beckhard and Harris (1977) argue that the commitment of a "critical mass" of people is necessary to provide energy for change to occur in the group. Similarly, Beer (1980) states that a "dominant coalition" of individuals (usually key managers and leaders) must accept the change for the entire group to accept it. If these key people do not support the change, it is likely to meet strong resistance.

The decision to adopt at the group level also is influenced by the group's enforcement of the new behavior. Members must share a belief that sanctions (positive or negative) will follow performance (or nonperformance) of the new behavior in order for it to become a social reality in the group (Katz & Kahn, 1978). Sanctioning power can be derived from the level of cohesiveness, the existence of a formal authority structure, and the reward system in the group (Beer, 1980). Cohesive groups can enforce compliance to group norms, as is illustrated by the example of the "rate buster" whose performance quickly is brought online with that of the group's. A strong leader who has

the power to reward compliance and punish noncompliance also can be a source of sanctioning power. In addition, a reward system that encourages group performance and discourages nonperformance of the new behavior enhances the likelihood of adoption. Such a system rewards the group rather than individuals for performance of the behavior.

Finally, for the change to be accepted by the group, it should involve structures and processes that are not too different from those that already exist in the group. For example, a change to decentralization and participative decision making may be difficult for a group that is accustomed to authoritarian leadership and unilateral decision making.

Unfreezing: The Decision To Adopt at the Organizational Level

The conditions that affect the decision to adopt change at the group level also have an impact at the organizational level. However, there are some factors that are most important at the organizational level. Two major variables are pressure to change and top-management support. Greiner (1967) and Beckhard (1970) report that internal or external pressure on the organization to adopt a change is a critical factor. Such pressure might include a decline in productivity or morale or changes in economic or market conditions. The change literature also suggests that top-management support is necessary for successful change efforts (Blake & Mouton, 1964; Dalton, Greiner, & Lawrence, 1970).

The degree of congruence between the change and organizational characteristics such as culture, structure, and formal systems is another factor at this level. The organization's culture—the shared values, beliefs, and norms that determine what is expected and what will be rewarded (formally or informally) in the organization (Margulies & Raia, 1978)—affects individual and group behavior in the organization and, consequently, can influence the decision to adopt a change. The organization's structure and formal systems also can influence how the organization responds to change. An illustration of this was provided in a 1980 *Business Week* article on various companies' attempts to change corporate culture. In 1961, AT&T initiated an effort to introduce more of a marketing philosophy into its traditional service-oriented operations. The company established a school to teach managers to design and manufacture products for specific customer needs. After completing the course, however, these managers found that little had changed in the company; noncustomized mass sales still were what counted, and the reward system discouraged managers from spending the time and effort to analyze and address customer needs. As a result, 85 percent of the graduates left the company, and AT&T disbanded the school. Clearly, the existing culture and formal systems at AT&T were incongruent with the attempt to adopt a marketing orientation.

Changing: The Decision To Continue

Individuals, groups, and organizations do not change overnight, but progress gradually from where they are to where they want to be. The interim includes experimentation, evaluation, and adjustment to the new behavior at all levels. It is during this phase that individuals, groups, or the organization may decide, either consciously or unconsciously, to discontinue the change and return to previous behaviors.

Goodman et al. (1980) theorized that the decision to continue practicing a new behavior can occur repeatedly during the change process or not at all. If there is a high degree of congruence between actual and expected outcomes, such a decision probably is not necessary. A decision about whether or not to continue practicing a new behavior usually is a result of inconsistencies between actual and expected outcomes, the availability of new alternatives and information, or unanticipated consequences of the change effort (Hultman, 1979; Mirvis & Berg, 1977). For example, in a survey-feedback intervention in a school district, Mohrman, Mohrman, Cooke, and Duncan (1977) found that in the schools that did not implement the program successfully, a number of unanticipated problems had emerged: (a) teacher groups viewed the survey data as invalid and irrelevant; (b) because of scheduling problems, groups of teachers from various departments (rather than ongoing work teams) were used to process the data; and (c) team leaders were not skilled in handling conflicts that arose during the problem-solving process.

The Concept of Transition State. A useful concept in understanding this middle phase of the change process is the “transition state” (Beckhard & Harris, 1977), the state of the organization when it “moves from today’s condition to some desired future condition” (p. 10). This transition period is different from the prechange and postchange states and requires particular attention if the change is to be sustained. Management must devise strategies for addressing the confusion about roles, processes, and structures that occurs during this period. Successful transition may be facilitated by having a management system that is separate from the pre or postchange states. For example, Blake and Mouton (1964) and Tornatzky (1976) suggest that one individual should be assigned responsibility for managing the change. Zand (1974) and Golembiewski (1979) propose that collateral organizations or ad hoc groups be established specifically to manage the change effort. These “change managers” should be rewarded and supported for sustaining the changes that are introduced.

Beckhard and Harris (1977) argue that the key requirement for successful management of the transition state is *continued feedback and information* regarding the change. They suggest several ideas for facilitating this feedback: (a) periodic work-team meetings, (b) organizational “sensing” meetings, (c) renewal conferences, and (d) performance reviews and evaluations that reinforce the change. Therefore, managers implementing change should create opportunities and allow time for two-way communication regarding the change.

Refreezing: Persistence of Change

The enthusiasm and energy associated with the early phases of a change may diminish over time. Sometimes there is backsliding from the new behavior to previous behaviors (Hinrichs, 1978). Certain factors internal and external to the organization affect the degree to which new behavioral patterns persist.

One factor is the congruence between the people, structures, processes, and environment of the organization and the behavior called for by the change. According to Beer (1980), change efforts may fail because the organization does not support (or impedes) the new behavior. Several conditions are necessary for individual, group, or organizational changes to become permanent: (a) formal systems such as personnel policies and reward systems must be consistent with the new behavior; (b) the implementation of these formal policies and systems must be congruent with the change; (c) the change must be supported by the individual's peer group; and (d) the change must be perceived as being part of the organization's culture (Beer, 1971; Huse, 1975). As mentioned earlier, AT&T's 1961 attempt to move from a service-oriented to a marketing-oriented company failed because of a lack of congruence in these areas.

Goodman et al. (1980) note that the existence of an institutionalized act does not guarantee its persistence. The act must be transmitted to successive generations of organizational members. The concept of transmission describes the process by which new members of the organization become socialized to the current behaviors of the work group and represents a second major factor in the refreezing process. Socialization takes place primarily on the group level, where new members learn critical behaviors through processes such as reinforcement, social modeling, and social interaction (Margulies & Raia, 1978). Organizational selection, training, performance appraisal, and compensation systems are important mechanisms through which desired behaviors can be transmitted from one generation of employees to another, and another, and so on.

Another concept related to the persistence of change is *diffusion*. Diffusion refers to the extension and adoption of a new behavior throughout a social system (Rogers & Shoemaker, 1971). Many change efforts focus only on one unit (e.g., a work group or department) in an organization. Walton (1975) and Goodman (1979) report that the work group targeted for the change often is the subject of envy from parts of the organization excluded from the change effort. Excluded groups sometimes can bring sufficient pressures to bear on the target group to destroy the change program or keep it from spreading any further in the organization. In the Rushton Mine experiment (Goodman, 1979), autonomous work groups were initiated in only one section of the mine. Other sections, believing that miners in the experimental section were receiving preferential treatment and more monetary benefits, created enough opposition to the experiment that it eventually had to be disbanded.

Careful planning is required to ensure that diffusion occurs. Beer and Driscoll (1977) and Walton (1975) have suggested several methods to facilitate the diffusion process:

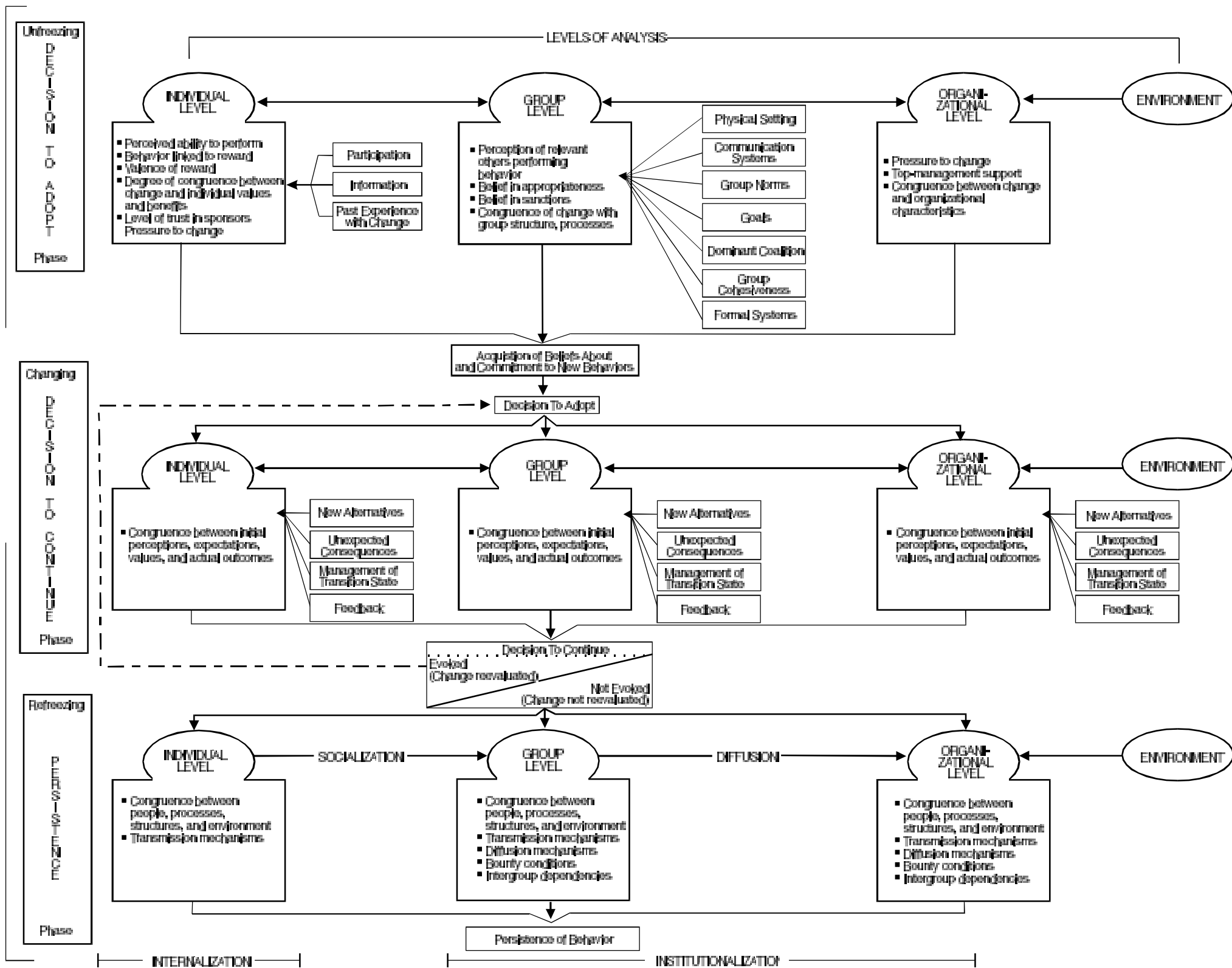
1. Communication about the change from the sponsor and/or credible managers is essential. This may require that a manager become familiar with the change by visiting one of the units in which the change already has been made before it is introduced in his or her own unit.
2. Top-management support for diffusion is critical.
3. A flow of experience, that is, transferring managers and personnel who have experience with the change to units that have not yet been introduced to it, can be effective.
4. Bureaucratic barriers may need to be removed. Again, congruence is important. Incentives and structures that encourage individuals to adopt the change should be created.
5. Organizational change managers should be identified so that someone is responsible for implementing and monitoring the diffusion process.

The character of *boundary conditions* within the organization also affects the process of diffusion. According to Alderfer (1976), the openness of boundaries between work units is curvilinearly related to the success of change programs. If boundaries between groups are too tight, the change will not penetrate. If boundaries are too loose, managers cannot buffer the work group or organization from external pressures; and the new form of work behavior may dissipate.

A final important consideration is the degree of interdependence between various parts of the organization. Planned organizational change often takes place in a network of interdependent groups. A breakdown in one may hinder the persistence of the new behavior in another. For example, Frank and Hackman (1977) report that the failure of the data-processing department to produce necessary information in a bank resulted in the failure of an entire OD change project. To maintain intergroup cooperation and communication, intergroup teams or boundary-spanning mechanisms can be initiated.

THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION MODEL

The preceding discussion encompasses the key elements of a model of the institutionalization process (see Figure 2). The model suggests that the adoption of a planned organizational change is a function of a variety of individual, group, organizational, and environmental factors. Furthermore, these factors interact to determine the extent of commitment by organizational members to implement the change. Once a change has been adopted in the organization, other conditions influence whether or not the change will continue. Certain factors lead individuals, groups, or the organization to reevaluate whether or not to continue to practice the new behaviors required by the change. If the decision is made to continue the change, certain processes and conditions are required to make the change permanent in the organization.



AN INVITATION TO FURTHER RESEARCH AND REFINEMENT

This paper has built on the conceptual work of Goodman et al. (1980) and other behavioral scientists in constructing a visual model of the institutionalization of change in organizations and in suggesting relationships among variables. Many of the relationships defined by the model have received minimal empirical support and, therefore, are speculative at this point. Further work now is needed to refine the model and to improve the current state of theory and application in the institutionalization of planned change. The model specifies a number of areas in which this analysis could take place. Specifically, work is needed to determine the relative importance of individual, group, organizational, and environmental factors in the institutionalization process. It is possible that the relative importance of these factors varies across the phases of the change process and according to the type and degree of change required. With respect to the type of change, we need to understand whether behavioral or structural interventions (or some combination of both) are most conducive to institutionalization. The preferred change strategy may be contingent on characteristics of the problem that the change is intended to address and on characteristics of the organization and its members.

Another area for study is the impact of the various human resource systems on the institutionalization process, i.e., how selection, performance appraisal, training and development, and compensation practices affect the adoption, continuation, and persistence of change. With respect to the reward system, for example, we do not know what types of rewards are most critical to the adoption decision or to the continuation decision. Other key questions are:

1. In what ways and by whom should the institutionalization process be managed?
2. How can individual, group, and top-management commitment be sustained once the “newness” of a change effort wears off?
3. How can the change be diffused most effectively throughout the entire organization?

These and other important questions should be addressed in future studies of the process of institutionalization.

In summary, the visual model presented in this paper suggests a number of rich areas for further work. Hopefully, the model will stimulate further conceptual and empirical work on institutionalization. The model also can serve as a useful guide for managers, training directors, and other practitioners as they develop, implement, and maintain organizational change programs.

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■ MANAGING THE ARATIONAL IN ORGANIZATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS

Gerard Egan

A basic framework for designing, facilitating, and assessing organizations and institutions and the subunits, projects, or programs within them—Model A—was first presented in *The Cutting Edge: Current Theory and Practice in Organization Development* (Egan, 1978). Model A is a rational, linear, and systematic model of design, functioning, and assessment. In its present form (Egan, 1985),¹ it includes three major areas. The first two are:

I. *The Performance System*

- Basis (needs/wants of customers)
- Mission (overall purpose)
- Major aims and strategic plans
- Specific goals, outcomes, results
- Programs, operational plans
- Material resources, financing, logistics

II. *The People in the System*

- Staffing (competent people)
- Roles and responsibilities
- Relationships among people
- Relationships among subunits
- Communication processes
- Management (coordination, facilitation, control)

The third area relates to variables that “encircle” the system and its members, affecting them, the work they do, and outcomes. These variables “rinse through” areas I and II. It is here that the arational aspect of the system appears.

III. *The Pervasive Variables*

- Principles of behavior, reward system
- Quality-of-work-life issues
- Interactions with the environment
- Culture and other forms of the arational

The development and use of this model over the last few years in managing, consulting, and training has indicated a need to temper it and all rational models used in organization development with a consideration of the extrarational, or rational, dimensions of systems. The models used to design and run organizations are not as rational, linear, and systematic as they first appear, because all rational models are, in

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¹ This article is adapted from Chapters 15 and 16 of *Change Agent Skills* by Gerard Egan, copyright © 1985 by Brooks/Cole Publishing Co. Monterey, CA. Used with permission.

practice, permeated by various forms of the arational. Because the organizational world is at the same time both rational and arational, systematic and unsystematic, linear and nonlinear, the model presented here is now more three dimensional.

The arational dimensions of organizations may be more prevalent than the rational dimensions (particularly in times of crisis); they certainly present the greatest challenges to both managers and consultants. A great deal of Peters and Waterman's (1982) book, *In Search of Excellence*, deals with the ability of an organization to cope with system-limiting forms of the arational and to develop system-enhancing forms of the arational.

The term "Arational" need not have the negative connotation that the term "irrational" does. If a manager were to shoot an incompetent employee, that would be irrational. However, when a manager keeps an employee who has proved, over a considerable period of time, to be incompetent, the manager is involved in one of the more common arationalities of organizational life. The term arational also does not imply that someone is wrong or at fault. For instance, the fact that two members of a managerial team enter an expressed or implied contract and then both, in different ways, fail to live up to this contract is one of the normal arationalities of life. However, it would be irrational for two parties to enter into a contract that neither had any intention of honoring.

Emotions, by definition, are arational, but this does not make them irrational or unreasonable. However, if, as a manager, I continually use my anger as a way of exercising control over those who report to me, then my emotions—or rather the use of my emotions—becomes irrational or unreasonable.

In this article, the arational is defined as the following:

1. Phenomena such as emotions and intuition, which, by definition, fall outside the rational;
2. Phenomena that, because of their complexity, are beyond the scope of reason (for instance, the assembling and full understanding of all data relating to a complex decision);
3. Phenomena that are unpredictable (for instance, many of the actions of human beings);
4. Deviations from reason that are so common among human beings that they cannot be called irrational (for instance, failure to live up to some of the provisions of a complex agreement).

Because the arational affects organizational life, we must be concerned with managing it in the service of productivity and quality of life within the organization. *Smart* managers understand and can use the various rational organizational models, methods, and skills that comprise common management practice. *Wise* managers, in addition, understand both system-limiting and system-enhancing forms of the arational. They understand why rational models do not always work; they are not surprised by—but rather expect and understand—the various "quirks" in the system. They even learn

how to cope with and productively manage the negative forms of arationality that flow through the system.

This article does not attempt to list all arationality with which managers and consultants must contend. Rather, it will present an outline for a managerial approach, defining the arational as a practical field for study and naming and organizing categories of the arational. Although no taxonomy of individual, system-enhancing, and system-limiting forms of arationality relevant to managerial practice can be complete, the 3 categories in Figure 1 provide a glimpse of the possibilities.

Individual			System Related
individual differences	unclear data	fantasy	slack resources
champions	values	motivation	unpredictable environments
laggards	data overload	defense mechanisms	preoccupation with mundane
incentives	creativity	enthusiasm	
unpredictability	standards	fanaticism	politics
self-interest	vision	endurance	"arrangements"
excuses	hidden data	need for security	quests
resistance	ambiguity	spirit	"loose coupling"
commitment	emotions	boredom, despair	culture
reluctance	inertia	hoopla	informal system
intuition	caring	conflict	vested interests
complexity	selflessness	patience	stagnation
blind spots	cowardice	hope	
imagination	bravery, heroism		

Figure 1. Some Areas of the Arational that Affect Organizations

SLACK RESOURCES, INERTIA, AND ENTROPY

Slack Resources

The concept of slack (Cyert & March, 1963; Galbraith, 1977; March & Simon, 1958) initially related to the problem of cognitive complexity (e.g., job scheduling in industrial organizations). Yet, when Pounds (1963) interviewed those responsible for making complex scheduling decisions, he found that they would ask, "What job-shop scheduling problem?" A kind of conspiracy exists in such situations to protect schedulers from being overwhelmed by impossible decisions. Central to this conspiracy is the notion of

slack resources. For instance, if a supervisor needs eight people to operate a work unit at peak times, he or she will hire nine. Slack is introduced into the system. When a sales representative makes a sale, he or she, knowing that delivery can be made in four weeks, quotes a delivery time of six weeks. More slack is introduced into the system. Enough slack ensures that the scheduler's quality of life does not suffer from decision overload.

Clearly, manufacturing firms are not the only systems that are subject to slack, nor is protection from decision overload the only reason for slack to emerge. It evolves in most systems for a variety of reasons, some of them related to quality of life. (Even people who like to work hard need a bit of elbow room now and then.)

If the work load increases, but the number of workers does not, the slack resources disappear and the system becomes taut. Workers are under greater stress, and friction results. Unfortunately, most managers do not know how to manage a taut system.

The problem with managing slack resources is that they are part of the informal rather than the formal system. Managers do not sit around asking themselves how they might introduce slack into the system. If anything, they try to eliminate dysfunctional slack. Since slack does not appear on the rational charts of the organization, it is difficult to define a problem as a lack of useful slack or as a failure to manage a taut system. It is difficult for managers to admit that many, if not most, problems in organizations are managerial problems.

Wise managers realize that they introduce slack and, up to a point, they know where it is. They learn how to manage the tradeoffs between tightening up the system for the sake of efficiency and the stress and dissatisfaction that result when the system is too tight.

Inertia

Inertia and entropy are not just laws of physics. They also are psychological and organizational laws that help us to understand why projects are not started or, once started, why they grind to a halt.

A body at rest tends to remain at rest; a body in motion tends to remain in motion in the same direction. These physical laws have their psychological and organizational counterparts. Individuals always have complained about how difficult it is to actually start working on something. Organizations, too, experience inertia. For example, many organizations have a great deal of trouble in starting MBO or performance planning and appraisal systems. Nothing seems to happen on schedule, and meetings do not take place. Inertia is part of beginnings. Once it is recognized that both organizational and individual inertia are a normal part of human experience, and that inertia does not necessarily imply ill will, it is easier to deal with.

Managing inertia primarily means managing *incentives* and the other antecedents to human behavior.

- Are there enough incentives for people to start the task?
- Are these incentives clear?

- Can these incentives motivate this person or this unit?
- Are there competing incentives (for doing something other than the required task)?
- What else is distracting the individual or the unit from the task?
- What can be done to increase the power of task-related incentives?
- What can be done to decrease the power of task-detracting incentives?
- What can be done to minimize distractions?

One tactic often used in regard to research work, business tasks, and personal chores is to invoke the Premack Principle: more probable behaviors can be used as incentives for less probable behaviors (Premack, 1965). For example, graduate students may be allowed to begin clinical work only after they have finished their dissertation proposals; creative tasks may be begun only after record keeping or other maintenance tasks have been completed. In most cases, inertia can be overcome by a combination of individual and system efforts.

Enthusiasm Versus Boredom

One antidote for inertia at the beginning of a project is another form of arationality: enthusiasm. Peters and Waterman (1982) point out over and over again that the best organizations are good at generating and maintaining enthusiasm. Sarason (1972) says that what people find so attractive at the beginning of an enterprise is that it introduces novelty and challenge into their lives, and that boredom, one of the most insidious forms of arationality, does the opposite:

The feeling that one is locked into a particular job or line of work, that one will never have the opportunity to test one's self in diverse kinds of tasks, is one consequence of pyramidally, hierarchically organized settings, but not limited to them. Many professional people outside such settings also feel trapped by circumstances that they perceive as preventing them from exploring new roles and untested interests and capacities A fair reading of *Walden Two* should leave the impression that Skinner believes that boredom is one of the most destructive feelings in our society Skinner believes that the happiness of an individual depends on an environment that permits him to remain curious about himself and his world and supports his efforts to move in new directions. (pp. 267-268)

Of course, there can be too much of a good thing. Initial excitement drives people and helps them to overcome inertia and obstacles. On the other hand, enthusiasm can mask difficulties that should be considered from the start. Excessive enthusiasm can turn into debilitating depression if the enterprise does not succeed. Therefore, it is part of the work of a manager to encourage enthusiasm—even to create it—and, at the same time, to foresee and try to control its potentially limiting side effects.

Entropy

For our purposes, entropy can be defined as the tendency for things to wind down or decay over time. This process is a normal part of the human and organizational condition. Even projects begun with great enthusiasm tend to run out of steam. Systems, programs, relationships, and individual enthusiasm all wind down over time. One or two of the scheduled follow-up feedback meetings actually take place. The crush of day-to-day work tempers the original enthusiasm, and reasons are found to delay, then cancel meetings. Finally, people find themselves unprepared because too many meetings have been canceled.

There are two major ways to manage entropy: prevention and maintenance (or follow-up).

Prevention

The first step is to recognize that entropy is normal and to try to build into programs the kinds of “ratchets” (Stein, 1980) that help to prevent backsliding. The nature of these ratchets will differ from system to system and from program to program. For example, youth officers find that their charges do well as long as contact with them is maintained, but when, because of the press of work, the contacts stop or become spaced too far apart, the kids get into trouble again. In this case, a community youth center might provide supplementary contacts and programs that serve as ratchets. The ratchets for new members of Alcoholics Anonymous are the telephone numbers of old members.

At the beginning of every project or program, managers need to ask themselves “In what ways is this venture likely to decay over time?” This does not reflect a negative attitude, but an understanding of entropy. Once the likely forms of entropy are identified, appropriate ratchets can be developed.

Follow-Up

Webster’s dictionary defines follow-up as “a system or instance of pursuing an initial effort by supplementary action.” Note the word “system.” Most people admit that follow-up is important and involve themselves in “instances” of pursuing initial efforts, but few build follow-up systematically into programs.

A multinational corporation hired consultants to assess the organization and to introduce needed productivity and quality-of-life changes. An intensive and costly action-research effort involved surveys, interviews, data analysis, feedback meetings, and action programs. The consultants left feeling that the members of the organization at all levels knew in specific ways what needed to be done and how to do it. Six months later, they discovered that practically nothing had been done.

For instance, the director of research and development and the director of operations both had said that they needed to talk to each other, work out some conflicts, and coordinate their efforts better. The consultants returned to find that the two had not met. The consultants arranged for a meeting and did not leave until the two directors had agreed to a date, time, and place for the next meeting and had arranged for a third party to monitor their efforts. Only with this kind of follow-up did change begin to take place in the corporation.

There is no one form of follow-up that is applicable to all systems. Managers and change agents must discover appropriate forms of follow-up and ways of tailoring them to the specific system.

THE POLITICS OF THE SYSTEM

Organizational politics are extremely arational. “Politics” implies interest groups, coalitions, power, influence, conflict, and bargaining (Bacharach & Lawler, 1981). One of the definitions of *politics* offered by Webster’s dictionary is “competition between groups or individuals for power and leadership.” Politics, then, involves at least two types of interrelated competition.

Competition for Prestige, Power, Influence, and Control

There are some people who find it rewarding to set norms for and control the behavior of others. In Plato’s time, the Sophists claimed that this was the real meaning of politics: “[P]olitics is in essence the pursuit and exercise of power—in the interest of those who pursue and exercise it” (Tucker, 1981, p. 1).

Competition for Scarce Resources and Control over Their Allocation

Webster’s dictionary defines vested interest as “an interest, as in an existing political, economic, or social arrangement, to which the holder has a strong commitment.” Although some systems are less political than others, all systems have some kind of politics. This includes businesses, universities, clubs, churches, and families. The politics and accompanying rules of systems are not written and posted. Rather, they are acted out. To be unaware of them can be dangerous.

Some people are more political than others, and this can lead to inequities in any kind of system. Some people think that politics are “dirty”; they leave politics to others. Of course, this provides those who are more political with even wider latitude to gain power and exercise influence. People who are strongly political often seem to work with a different set of rules. Although unwritten, these rules also are part of the political culture of the system.

Managing the Politics of Systems

Less political members of systems often feel powerless. They do not know how to play the political games or how to exercise more influence in the system. These people can learn by observing the politically successful members of the system, who generally have certain traits or skills in common. These people are effective at:

1. *Knowing the informal system.* Good politicians have a feeling for the arational, including an understanding of what is happening in the informal system.

2. *Organizing.* People who are politically astute are good at organizing other people—enlisting them in the service of a cause. They know that there is power in numbers.
3. *Addressing self-interests.* The politically astute appeal to the self-interests of those whom they are organizing. “Do it *my* way and you will get what *you* want.” Politicians listen to polls. They know which way the political winds are blowing and they know how to sail with the wind.
4. *Communication.* Politicians know how to talk to people or, if they are not skilled in communicating, they surround themselves with people who are. Politicians are good at persuading and selling. They are assertive: they are not hesitant to sell their ideas, opinions, values, goals, and programs.
5. *Conspiracy.* Effective politicians know when to work in public and when to work behind the scenes. If they cannot organize people openly, they do so quietly. They know when and how to use a conspiratorial approach to power.
6. *Making friends.* One way to gain power is to make friends with those who are in power. This may mean swallowing one’s pride, but loss of pride may be a small price to pay for the cause. Of course, political friendships differ qualitatively from ordinary human friendships. A strong element of self-interest always exists. Political friendships can be discarded when they are no longer useful.
7. *Causes.* People who are politically astute know how to “work” causes. They find parades to lead or they create issues around which people can rally. They know that, historically, the ideas or ideals that have inflamed people are basically simple. Therefore, public discussions about causes are simple and exhortative. The more complex issues associated with the causes are dealt with privately.

Even highly principled politicians use some of these means to further causes that they believe will benefit people and they do so without becoming cynical. Tucker (1981) sees politics as value-neutral leadership. To say that leadership and politics are value-neutral phenomena in themselves does not mean that they are value-neutral in practice. The values of the leader, whether service or self-interest or some combination of both, flow through his or her political strategies.

THE INFORMAL SYSTEM

The “formal” system is that set of arrangements that is publicly and officially endorsed by the system. The “informal” system is the set of arrangements that actually exists within the system without official endorsement. “Informal” does not necessarily refer to things that are wrong with the system; informal arrangements may well contribute to productivity and quality of life. On the other hand, they may interfere with both. As is noted earlier, arationality is not the same as ineffectiveness and inefficiency.

A person talking about an informal system may say: “I know what is written down, but this is the way we do it.” When new members of a system “learn the ropes,” they learn both the formal and the informal rules and procedures.

Some members of a system may not be cognizant of some of its informal aspects. For instance, the members of an organization may know that certain formal procedures must be followed in order for a person to be promoted, but they may not be sure just how the final decision is made. Even the leaders of a system may be uncertain of some of its informal aspects. For instance, managers may not be fully aware of the “arrangements” made among managers and workers on the shop floor. There is, however, some knowledge that an informal system exists.

There seem to be some advantages to maintaining both a formal and an informal system. The total system remains “loosely coupled” (Weick, 1979) and potentially more flexible. For instance, the rules and regulations that are not enforced are still “on the books” and can be used as a backup if the informal system fails. The informal system often refers to structure: roles, responsibilities, relationships, communication, lines of authority, and accountability. The head of a department proves to be a titular head, and real authority emanates from his or her assistant; information does not flow through official channels but through the grapevine; a person is hired to do one thing but finds himself or herself doing another. The informal system at its best tempers the rigidities of the formal system, takes into consideration the idiosyncrasies of people, spreads both authority and responsibility more widely throughout the system, blends justice with equity, is sensitive to quality-of-life issues such as the need for slack resources, and manages roadblocks to productivity quietly and efficiently. In general, it deals creatively with the tensions that are common in the struggle to balance productivity with quality of life. From a manager’s point of view, the price of such advantages may be loss of formal control—but, then, there are tradeoffs in every system.

Wise managers know that most, if not all, systems are “loosely coupled” and that the formal system usually is complemented by informal forms. However, they also know when the informal system is contributing to the good of the whole and when it is dysfunctional. For instance, wise parents understand that their teenaged children will find a variety of ways to distance themselves from the injunctions of their elders in their search for independence. Such parents may well ignore certain violations of rules and regulations, provided that the security of both the family unit and the individual members is protected. On the other hand, prison officials may ignore the informal system because they do not want to know, feel powerless, or feel that it is part of the punishment that inmates must suffer. This is “living with” rather than managing the informal system.

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

The culture of a system pervades the entire system, giving it individuality and color. In a very real sense, the culture of the system is the system. As a major source of both

system-enhancing and system-limiting irrationality, culture recently has received more theoretical and practical attention (Allen & Kraft, 1982; Deal & Kennedy, 1982).

Culture can be divided into five overlapping and interactive categories: history, beliefs, values, standards, and patterns of behavior. Each category contributes in its own way to the total culture of the system.

1. *History/Tradition.* *The ways in which the past lives on in the organizational present.* This includes the history, the stories, the critical historical incidents, the myths, the founders, the heroes and heroines, the exploits, and the traditions of the system. People celebrate certain things in the system's past and forget others. For example, the birthday of the founder and his entrepreneurial exploits may be celebrated while the actions that merited him the title of "robber baron" are forgotten. From time to time, these historical perceptions may be officially revised, as in the cases of Stalin and Mao.

History and tradition also affect the next three categories, which constitute the heart of culture.

2. *Beliefs.* These are the assumptions, understandings, and dogmas of the system. They relate to the work the system does, the people in the system, and the environment. Churches and some social organizations state their beliefs explicitly. More and more corporations now also are doing so.

3. *Values.* These are the things the organization prizes. For example, IBM prizes customer service; managers must spend a great deal of time listening and responding to customer inquiries and complaints. Peters and Waterman (1982) discovered that the best corporations are "values driven."

4. *Norms and Standards.* These are the "oughts," "shoulds," "dos," "don'ts," principles, policies, rules, laws, and taboos that govern the behavior of the system as a whole, the subunits within the system, and the members of the system. Norms and standards define the behaviors that will be rewarded in the system and limit the behaviors that will be tolerated in the system.

5. *Patterns of Behavior.* Included here are the ways of doing things in the system: the patterns of behavior, habits, rituals, and ceremonies that are prevalent. Just as history and tradition influence beliefs, values, and standards, so do beliefs, values, and standards generate patterns of behavior. For example, in organizations that are very conservative and prize stability, risk-taking behaviors do not abound.

In practice, the flow from history to beliefs, values, and standards to patterns of behavior is not a simple, unidirectional process. Changing beliefs can lead to changes in the ways in which system members understand the system's history. New behaviors are tried and lead to revisions in the "oughts" of the system. There is a great deal of irrationality in the creation and maintenance of a culture.

Degrees of Consciousness in the Understanding of Culture

The pattern of these five interactive categories constitutes the culture of the system. However, this does not mean that either the members of the system or people outside the system are fully conscious of the culture as a whole or of any of its parts. In any system, there is a continuum of awareness, from fully conscious to totally unconscious. There are, of course, individual differences in awareness among the members of the system. These differences in cultural awareness, in turn, relate to the overt and covert cultures.

Overt Culture

Overt culture refers to the degree to which the five elements of culture are:

1. Written down in public documents;
2. Discussed in a public forum;
3. Celebrated in a public way; or
4. Any combination of these.

“Public” here means at least openly within the organization. For instance, middle managers may complain to a consultant that their views are not heard at higher levels, yet be afraid to say the same thing in meetings with their vice president.

A significant number of system members may be aware of the particular mixture of history, beliefs, values, standards, and behaviors that constitute the culture of system, and even discuss them among themselves, but they are not speaking of the overt culture of the system unless the discussion takes place in some kind of public forum. For example, IBM makes it clear to everyone in the system that service is important, and formal systems and expectations are established in order to deliver the kind of service IBM promises.

The overt dimensions of an organization’s culture can be challenged precisely because they are overt.

Covert Culture

The covert culture of the system refers to any or all five of the categories insofar as they are not written down, are not part of the awareness of members regarding the system, are only partially understood, and remain (for whatever reason) undiscussed in the public forums of the organization. For example, in some families, sex is never discussed, and references to sex not made. The rule is not written down, it is not discussed, and, quite likely, it is not even in the awareness of the members of the family. Only when the children grow up and leave the home do they discover that the rule existed.

Degrees of Covertness. Hall (1966, 1977) refers to culture as the “hidden dimension.” Although all the dimensions of culture need not be hidden, there are varying degrees of covert culture in organizations.

1. *Undiscussed.* These dimensions simply are not written down or discussed in public. Organizational values generally fall into this category.
2. *Undiscussable.* Some dimensions of culture may be sensitive and, therefore, undiscussable. An example would be managers' feelings about their lack of power. Even further, some dimensions of culture may be so sensitive that they cannot even be alluded to. For instance, in one organization the possibility that the president was both incompetent and vindictive was a completely forbidden topic. People were afraid to allude to it even in private.
3. *Unconscious.* The effects of history and tradition, current beliefs, values and standards, and/or patterns of organizational behavior may be so hidden that most of the people in the organization are unaware of them.

Covert culture is a powerful regulator of behavior, and much of its power is drawn from the fact that it is out of sight. Change efforts in organizations and institutions can be stymied by the overt culture of the system, but the underground culture is a far more potent restraining force.

Espoused Culture Versus Culture-in-Use. Just because an organization states its beliefs, values, and standards does not mean that it acts on them. The actual patterns of behavior found in an organization tell us what the organization really believes, actually prizes, and actually encourages and sanctions. For instance, many organizations state that the people who work there are their most important resource. This does not mean that they live this out in the ways in which they treat their employees. Quality-of-work-life considerations are often brushed aside in favor of economic considerations.

Strong Versus Weak Cultures

If the elements of organizational culture—whether overt or covert—have a strong impact on behavior, the organization has a strong culture. On the other hand, if the elements of culture have little impact on behavior, the organization has a weak culture. For instance, if it generally is believed by managers in a corporation that interim feedback sessions are an important part of the performance planning and appraisal process even though these sessions are not mandated, yet few such sessions actually take place, the covert culture in this regard is weak. It is obvious that an organization's culture may be strong in some ways and weak in others. The interplay between the strong/weak and overt/covert dimensions of culture is depicted in Figure 2.

	Overt	Covert
Strong	The Excellent Companies	Trouble
Weak	Aimlessness	Aimlessness

Figure 2. A Culture Grid

Organizations with weak cultures, whether overt or covert, tend to be aimless. They do not know what they believe in, they do not know what they want, and they do not know where they are going.

In their book *In Search of Excellence*, Peters and Waterman (1982) imply that the best companies have strong, overt cultures. These companies celebrate the best in their traditions; they have strong beliefs, values, and standards that they promote publicly; and the patterns of behavior that are generated are both system- and individual-enhancing. The cultural elements, stated as norms or standards, that Peters and Waterman (1982) found to be shared by the most successful companies are:

1. Having a bias toward action;
2. Sticking close to customers;
3. Encouraging autonomy and entrepreneurship; letting champions run;
4. Believing in people; developing them as the most important resource;
5. Being driven by clear values;
6. Sticking to what the company does best;
7. Developing a simple structural form and a lean staff; and
8. Letting everyone know what needs to be tight and what can be loose.

In their book, Peters and Waterman make these injunctions overt. But whether overt or covert, they tend to drive the best corporations toward excellence.

Covert Culture and Governing Variables

Anthropologists tend to study cultures as givens. Leaders and managers in organizations, on the other hand, like to challenge and mold organizational culture. Argyris (1982) is

one of the few people who have done research in changing organizational cultures. Because beliefs and values, whatever their sources, lead to the development of “shoulds” and “oughts,” they are powerful controllers of behavior. Argyris calls them “governing values” or “governing variables” (p. 86). He talks about two major forms of organizational culture, which he calls Model I and Model II.

Model-I Systems

Argyris suggests that certain governing variables contribute to both long-term productivity and quality of life in the organization, whereas others militate against both. What he calls “Model I,” or dysfunctional, governing variables are beliefs that are common in the covert culture of most organizations, institutions, and communities. Examples of such beliefs or values are:

1. *Definition of purpose:* “I am the one who is to define unilaterally the purposes of this organization (department, classroom, family, friendship).”
2. *Winning:* “Winning in this system (however winning may be defined in any particular system) is to be maximized, and losing is to be minimized.”
3. *Reason:* “Reason is to be extolled; emotions, especially negative emotions, are to be ignored.”

Argyris suggests that this choice of governing variables—a choice of which members of the system may be unaware—sets off the following processes:

Governing Variables. Governing values are chosen, inherited, or absorbed from the surrounding culture (the culture of the system or the culture of the environment). For example, one or more people in the system absorb the value that “winning” is extremely important.

Action Strategies. People develop strategies for action that are in keeping with their governing values. For instance, if winning is extremely important, people will hesitate to cooperate with others if this means that the others might win instead. People bent on winning may not be aware of the importance of this governing variable for themselves, especially if it is part of the covert culture of the system. Nor may they be aware that their choice of action strategies stems from this variable. They may see themselves merely as “ambitious” or “assertive.”

Consequences of Strategies. The choice of action strategies has consequences for the person acting, other people in the system, and the system itself. For instance, the person bent on winning is viewed with suspicion. The legitimate needs of other people are pushed aside. Even the goals of the organization can become secondary to “winning” if such behavior is not checked. In Model-I systems, “cover your tracks” is a standing injunction, even though it may never be verbalized.

Impact on Learning. Learning is inhibited in Model-I systems. People bent on winning hoard information if it suits their purposes; they do not offer their ideas, plans,

or decisions to others for input or evaluation (criticism). Therefore, as Argyris (1982) notes, learning in Model-I systems is “self-sealing” (p. 87).

System Effectiveness. Given the governing values, the action strategies, and the consequences of these strategies in Model-I systems, these systems are probably never as effective in pursuing their goals as they might be. However, their lack of effectiveness may be masked in several ways. For example, the members of the system bent on winning may seem to be very industrious; the ways in which they promote themselves rather than the system are often hidden. Secondly, most Model-I systems compare themselves to other Model-I systems. “We certainly are as efficient and as effective as our competition” may well be a misleading statement. Argyris suggests that Model-I strategies may be effective in the short run but not in the long run.

By examining the history, assumptions, values, principles, patterns of behavior, and language of a system, one can discover its governing variables, especially its covert governing variables. A Model-I orientation is reflected in the following:

- “It is not good to question people in authority.”
- “That’s the way we always have done it.”
- “Men are more rational than women.”
- “Conflict is disturbing and is best handled by ignoring it.”
- “Managers are special people; they need not model the behaviors they expect of subordinates.”

Most, if not all, of these statements would be part of the covert culture. An examination system will reveal its specific aggregate of Model-I governing variables.

Model-II Systems

Model-II governing variables are different from, but not opposite to, those of Model-I. For instance, a Model-I variable is “maximize winning, minimize losing.” Its opposite, “maximize losing, minimize winning” is certainly not a Model-II variable. However, “maximize cooperation and collaboration within the possibilities and limitations of the resources of the system” is a Model-II governing variable. Some others are:

1. *Freedom:* “Free and informed choice on the part of the members of the system is important.”
2. *Working together:* “Cooperation and collaboration within the constraints of the resources of the system are desirable.”
3. *Information:* “Valid and timely sharing of information is important for effectiveness, efficiency, and quality of life.”

Statements such as these generally are part of the overt culture of the organization. Argyris maintains that these kinds of governing variables set off a process that is quite

different from that which takes place in systems that are governed principally by Model-I variables.

Governing Variables. Model-II variables might well be part of the heritage of a system and therefore, to some certain degree, outside the awareness of the members of the system. However, in a world that is heavily populated with Model-I systems, it is more likely that Model-II governing variables are the objects of explicit choice. For instance, if collaboration is not explicitly named as one of the primary values of the system, it is likely that the “maximize winning, minimize losing” governing variable will fill the gap, because this variable is so prevalent in the internal and external culture.

Action Strategies. Model-II governing variables generate a different set of action strategies. For instance, if conflict is seen as a normal part of human interaction and as a potential source of growth, a set of action strategies related to surfacing and dealing directly with conflict will be generated. This is not the same as saying that conflict is desirable in and of itself and should be generated if it does not occur in normal transactions.

Consequences of Strategies. Model-II governing variables also have consequences for the self, others, and the system. For instance, organizational strategies for dealing with conflict can benefit:

1. *The individual*, by relieving him or her of the total responsibility for managing conflict;
2. *Others*, by providing a climate that encourages the management of conflict and structural safety in doing so; and
3. *The system itself*, because conflicts have less tendency to go underground (with less negative consequences for both productivity and quality of life).

Impact on Learning. Model-II governing variables tend to create a climate of learning rather than a climate of distrust. The surfacing of conflicts provides information that otherwise would not be available. A demand is made on the members of the system to offer their views, plans, and decisions for public testing and evaluation.

System Effectiveness. Argyris (1982) suggests that while a system tries to move from Model I to Model II, there might be some loss of efficiency. But in the long run, such things as the ready availability of information, decreased defensiveness, increased risk taking, collaboration among individuals and teams, and increased internal commitment lead to both improved quality of life and increased productivity.

There probably are no such things as pure Model-I or pure Model-II systems. Rather, three continuums seem to exist.

1. *The aggregate of social systems.* In the first continuum, all the organizations, institutions, and communities of the world are distributed along a line anchored at one end by Model I and at the other by Model II. The distribution, however, is skewed, with many more systems bunched on the Model-I side of the continuum.

2. *The subunits of systems.* The second continuum shows the distribution of the subunits of a system between Model I and Model II. Individual systems need not be homogeneous, that is, some of the units may tend toward Model I while others tend toward Model II.

3. *Individual members of systems.* On the third continuum, the individuals who comprise any given unit of the system are distributed along the line between Model I and Model II. Some individuals, in their transactions with others, are governed more by Model-I values, and some are governed more by Model-II values.

Managing Culture-Related Arationality

Presupposing that dysfunctional traditions, beliefs, assumptions, “musts,” taboos, aspirations, and rituals can constitute cultures that inhibit the development of both people and systems, the questions that remain are: Why do people tolerate the dysfunctional dimensions of system culture? What mechanisms keep these dysfunctional dimensions in place? The answers may lie in adaptation, lack of awareness, inertia, and the need for security. Managing the dysfunctional dimensions of culture, then, means managing these variables.

Adaptation

As Galbraith (1979) points out, part of the power of culture comes from *adaptation*. He suggests that one reason (but certainly not the only reason) why the poor remain locked into their poverty is that they adapt to the culture of poverty, that is, they learn to live with it. The children of the poor adapt to poverty as part of their inheritance. Cultural adaptation, however, affects everyone. Middle-class people adapt to the mores and rituals of the middle class. Most of us have adapted to Model-I systems and practices. We have been born into them; we think, feel, and act Model I. “Maximizing winning and minimizing losing,” whether in a virulent or benign form, becomes part of us. Therefore, the first step in managing arationality is to understand and respect the power of adaptation.

Hackman and Oldham (1980) claim that millions of well-educated people in North America are *underemployed*. However, since they adapt, job dissatisfaction becomes a relatively invisible phenomenon. Even self-reports of job satisfaction are suspect because of adaptation: if things are not terrible, people will say that they are satisfied. Moreover, once dissatisfied workers adapt to their surroundings, they resist change, even change that will bring them more satisfying jobs. Change would mean that they would have to learn new things, and their zest for learning has waned.

Lack of Awareness

Most people do not reflect explicitly on culture. Adaptation implies lack of cultural awareness. In working with leaders in organizations, Argyris (1982) found that even

people who were explicitly aware of the differences between Model I and Model II and who had committed themselves to move toward Model II were often unaware that they were using Model-I strategies to try to do so. Therefore, a basic step in the process of managing a culture is to become aware of it. Both system managers and system members could benefit from the skills of what anthropologists call “ethnography,” the work of describing and understanding a culture (see Spradley, 1979, 1980).

Managing the dysfunctional dimensions of culture means helping the members of the organization, institution, or community to get in touch with these dimensions. This can be a thankless task. For example, announcing that a system practices covert forms of racism probably would generate a great deal of denial, even if there is evidence to support the claim. Rather, it would be better to help the members of the system to come to this realization themselves. People are not always eager to examine their behavior, its meaning, and the premises on which it is based.

Freire (1970) has made the term “consciousness raising” part of our contemporary vocabulary. Unless people become aware of their oppression and its causes, they remain victims of both themselves and others. However, consciousness raising is not just something that one person or one group does to another. It generally implies that self-search has become part of the educator’s style. For Freire it also implies the governing variable “free and informed choice.” One must bear in mind that helping people to become aware of the various ways in which they have become victims of their culture can itself become another form of oppression. It is like dragging slaves kicking and screaming to their freedom.

Inertia

The interactive web of traditions, beliefs, values, norms, behaviors, and language that constitutes culture is not readily changed. The way we have been has a way of anchoring us to the way we are rather than speeding us on to the way we could be. If inertia is to be managed, there must be incentives to lure people beyond where they are. Imagination is extremely important in this process. Managing cultural inertia requires tapping into the imaginal resources of the members of the system. It is like writing a scenario. If the present scenario inhibits personal and system growth and development, more attractive scenarios must be presented to stir up the members of the system. The question “What if . . .”, can be a powerful tool in this process.

Security

All of us have needs for security. As long as these needs are fulfilled, we do not reflect very much on them. Maintaining the cultural status quo seems secure to many people. For example, some people choose poverty over emigrating to an unfamiliar culture. Present evils, however bad they are, sometimes pale in comparison with unknown ones.

The quest for security can make people engage in self-defeating behavior. Even when people are poorly served by governments, schools, or the helping professions, they are slow to call for reform in these and other powerful institutions because these

institutions deal with basic needs, that is, the need for order instead of chaos, the need for knowledge rather than ignorance, and the need for health rather than sickness. People are willing to keep on funding such institutions even when accountability is poor, because the institutions deal with their insecurities.

Facilitating changes in the culture of both individuals and systems is a long, arduous process. Some ideal forms of cultural change in organizations presently are beyond the scope of human beings. Cultural reeducation can lead to greater freedom in the way that all meaningful learning does: it can help to increase options for both individuals and organizations. However, those interested in facilitating cultural reeducation must remember that a “working anthropology” (Egan & Cowan, 1979) of systems, especially of one’s own system, is not a common thing. Although people may say that they want to be free, one cannot assume that they will do those things required to make them free. In the long run, freedom must be seized; it cannot be conferred.

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■ A MODEL FOR INNOVATION

Timothy M. Nolan and Sandra J. Nolan

Innovation is critical to organizational success. As business and funding environments become less forgiving, there are increased stresses on the organization to adapt to changes—to innovate. At a time when most organizations are feeling a severe need to be innovative, many find that they are not all that proficient as innovators. This has caused a scramble to identify successful organizations that could serve as templates for enhancing innovation. Unfortunately, this effort to find other innovators to copy has—for several reasons—not been very successful. The search generally turned up only a few good examples (that is, 3M and Hewlett Packard in the private sector and the Denver Children’s Museum in the public sector). Careful study of these examples led, at best, to a set of precepts that were not readily copied. The cultural heritage of both 3M and Hewlett Packard as research-based organizations was ultimately identified as the key reason people found it reinforcing to dabble, to create, and finally to innovate. The quick-fix mentality of many leaders of western organizations meant that those who were searching wanted quicker, easier answers.

The entrepreneurial success of the Denver Children’s Museum might have served as an innovative beacon of success for those in not-for-profit and public sectors. Here again the culture at the Denver Children’s Museum was so much different from that of other not-for-profits that even when the entrepreneurial Denverites packaged and sold their techniques for others to use, few could imitate them successfully.

The reason that so many companies and organizations are frightfully poor at innovation is due to the magnifying impact of a dual problem. The first layer of this problem lies at the individual level. Very few adults show up at their workplaces intrinsically creative. Probably the most universal accomplishment of formal education, public and private, has been the squelching of creativity. We educate in a highly convergent manner, whereby right answers are graded and grades are converted to a gatekeeper status defining success and failure. Truth is defined at the back of the teacher’s edition of the textbook. The people who do survive the year-in, year-out onslaught of “right answers” and emerge creative tend to do so because of a fairly significant degree of deviance. They might have been class clowns or loners whom no one much bothered to understand. Seldom were they appreciated by the

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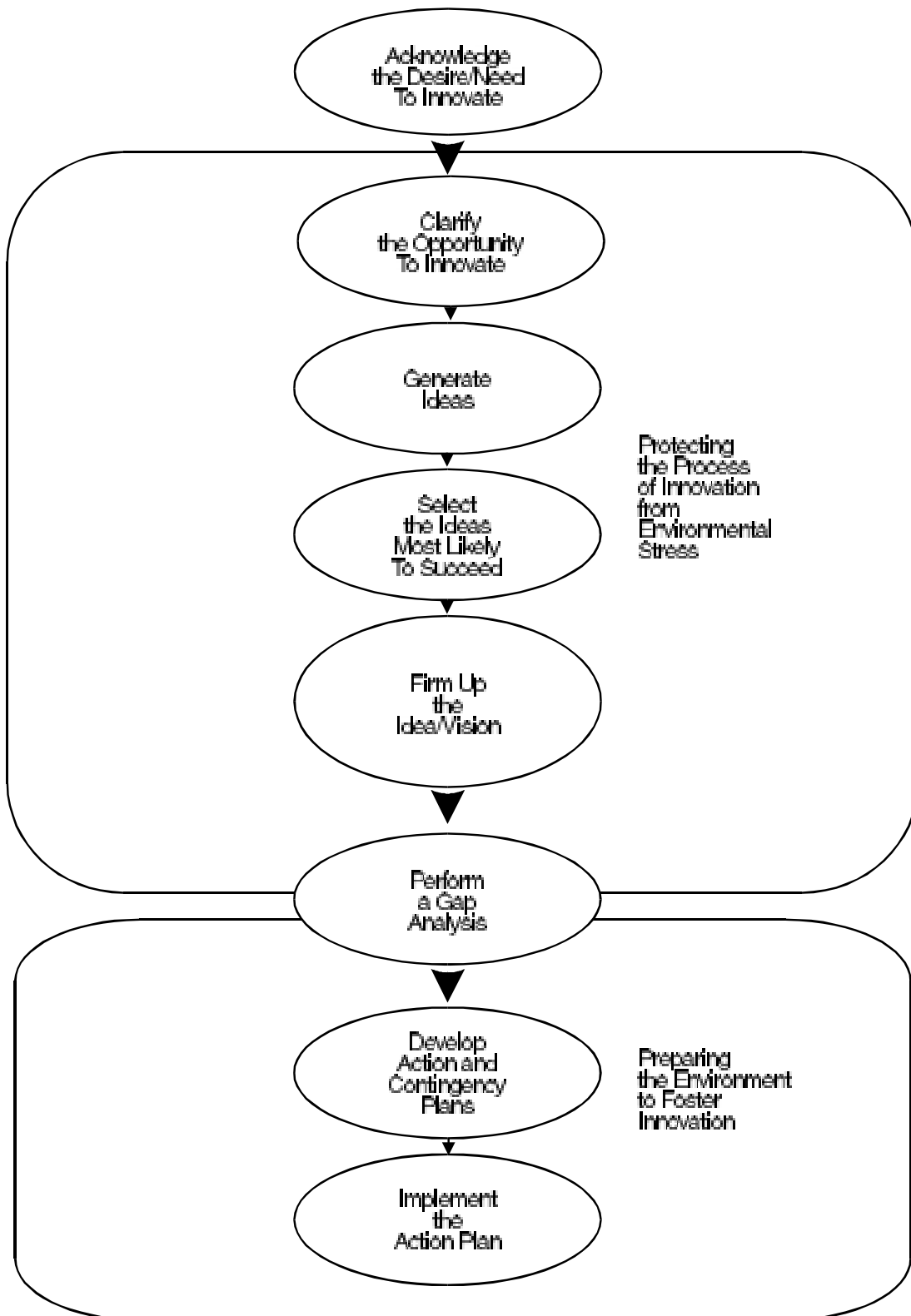
teachers who had, of course, recently read the “right answers” in their teacher’s editions.

Those who are creative are often unable to convert their great ideas to the usefulness of an organizational innovation. To understand why this is true, we should look at the difference between creativity and innovation. Creativity is the ability to generate ideas—to see options when faced with a challenge. Innovation is the practical adaptation of an idea and results in some change in behaviors, processes, or functions. In most organizations there are many more ideas than innovations. As we carefully examine organizational innovation at the individual level, it is clear that those who are creative do not know how to make their ideas result in organizational changes. A major reason is that creative employees often have a heritage of being organizationally deviant or are naive regarding the way the organization functions. Not only do they not find joy in tinkering with ways to make the organization better; they often do not *believe* that it can happen. Their creativity has little positive impact, because many of them sit outside the mainstream of organizational life lobbing howitzer-like rounds of ideas at the fortress of the remote decision makers. In some cases, they even seem to collude in making sure their ideas are improperly aimed—for fear that the organization might respond and prove them wrong.

Another major reason that employees fail to be innovative is that the organization does not support the process. As any medium or large group tries to bring order to itself—to *organize*—it creates limiting structures, reward systems, appraisal systems, and lines of authority. The net result is a clear message that adherence to structure is strongly desired. Innovation is often seen as deviance—as a challenge to all the effort that has been placed into organizing. The less secure a given manager is, the less comfortable he or she will be with suggestions to change. Whenever middle managers are feeling *very* insecure, it is a particularly treacherous time to attempt to suggest organizational interventions.

Does this mean, somehow, that those who innovate are destined to continue to do so and those who do not innovate are doomed forever to wish they could? We think not.

The Model for Innovation (see Figure 1) graphically represents an approach to enhancing innovation. The model stresses skill development in creative idea generation and organizational innovation for individuals in an environment of organizational support. It addresses both convergent and divergent types of opportunities for change. Although the model is linear, it can readily serve as a template to better understand a process of innovation already underway.



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Figure 1. Model for Innovation

ACKNOWLEDGING THE DESIRE/NEED TO INNOVATE

The first step in the process is the point at which it becomes clear that there is a need to innovate. This might be the result of an organizational mandate, such as that which might result from a strategic planning process. It may come from an individual or small group within the organization. The signals of the need to innovate may be very obvious, coming from significant threats or opportunities outside the organization. The felt need to innovate may likewise be much more subtle—a vague glimmer that things could be done in a better way. Interestingly, any of these starting points can become the potent beginning of a powerful process of innovation.

Whether the process proceeds from this awareness level forward depends on many variables. Sustained commitment is a critical variable, and another one is whether the individual or organization will sustain its desire to innovate—or if the process will die. More often than not, the process does not continue; inertia keeps both individuals and organizations proceeding as they have been. All too often they “get over” their belief that change is necessary. Another key variable is the overall climate for innovation, that is, whether the organization nurtures innovative efforts and whether champions are available to carry forward the ideas and programs.

In organizationally mandated change efforts, a critical step is to establish a group to carry the process forward. Which people are asked to serve on the group, how clear their mandate is, and the level of organizational support will help determine both the initial commitment to the process and the ultimate outcome of the effort.

PROTECTING THE PROCESS OF INNOVATION FROM ENVIRONMENTAL STRESS

This aspect of our model addresses the need to give the creative aspects of this process room to flourish. Just as a fetus will die if it is forced to leave the womb before it is ready to survive outside, an effort at innovation will perish if it is prematurely thrust into an unforgiving organizational environment before it is fully developed.

Highly successful innovations maintain this status of protection from organizational reality in one of two ways:

1. *Invisibility either by design or by accident.* This includes the informal “skunkworks,” made popular by Peters and Waterman (1982), whereby innovative efforts are fostered by individual tinkerers and champions working outside the system to develop new ways of doing things, new products, and new services. This also is true in mainstream efforts in which no one is tracking the process closely: anonymity enables people to be exempt from the organizational stresses that can kill the not-yet-fully developed idea.

2. *Protection from organizational stresses by someone in power.* The Fiero automobile project at General Motors is such a case. Intervention by key upper-middle managers is credited with keeping this project (which was outside the normal GM structure) alive at least three times during its vulnerable stages (Pinchot, 1985).

Clarifying the Opportunity To Innovate

Once the decision to innovate has been made, it is necessary to understand the problem to be solved or the opportunity to be pursued. If the need to innovate stems from a recurring manufacturing problem, it may be helpful to define the problem. If it stems from the desire to innovate, it may be helpful to identify the market need the organization is seeking to satisfy.

Care must be taken here. In a process that flourishes when those involved are creative, it is easy to begin the process in a way that will overwhelm the people, engender pessimism, and depress creativity. Press for enough clarity to proceed with mutual understanding and enthusiasm. Do *not* overanalyze the problem or opportunity. There will be sufficient time for that in later stages of our model.

Generating Ideas

When opportunities need to be opened up, the idea-generation phase is critical. Done well, a broad menu of options will be created. Various research on idea generation indicates several important facts:

- The more ideas generated, the higher their overall quality.
- The best ideas tend to be found in the second half of all ideas generated.
- Individuals working separately tend to generate more diverse ideas than are generated when they work as a group.

The drive is to maximize the number and quality of ideas being generated. This is done by the traditional—but often poorly practiced—tenets of brainstorming (that is, accepting all ideas, pushing for quantity, and suspending judgment). It is also enhanced by the use of more specialized and sometimes more structured approaches.

It is most productive when a mixture of group and individual efforts is employed. A problem in brainstorming groups is that judgment is almost never *really* suspended. “Far-out” ideas may then never be expressed. Groups also tend to develop patterns in their idea generation. Groups also restrict people’s ability to get their ideas out. Logistically, a ten-person group with an hour to spend allows each person only six minutes of space to express ideas—if space were somehow distributed evenly. Operating individually, each person has the full sixty minutes available. Mixing group and individual time greatly increases the number of ideas, the quality of ideas made available, the diversity of those ideas, and the satisfaction of those involved in idea generation.

Selecting the Ideas Most Likely To Succeed

If the idea-generation stage is done well, the employees will be faced with the task of selecting from hundreds of ideas those that will best serve their purpose. It is not unusual for a group of eight or ten people to generate five hundred ideas in a period of two to three hours.

They obviously cannot use all the ideas, so it becomes necessary to determine which ideas are most likely to succeed. This is best done as a multiphase process. The first phase is a raw sort. Each person is asked to pick the top six to ten ideas of all those arrayed in front of them. This will result in convergence on thirty to fifty of the ideas from the much broader list.

The second phase of selection is to develop criteria for judging the quality of ideas. This includes defining who will have to approve an idea and what factors will be important (for example, implementation and training costs). In this phase, a grid is frequently designed for displaying the best ideas (on the horizontal axis) and the selection criteria (on the vertical axis). The ideas can then readily be rated against each of the criteria. The group discussion that this grid will generate will be most enlightening. If an individual is working through this process alone, this step can be helpful, because it not only aids in selecting the most-likely-to-succeed ideas, but it also helps to define the marketplace or the organizational environment.

Firming Up the Idea or Vision

Many processes of innovation fail at this point. The individual or group has selected its hottest idea or ideas and is ready to turn them over to the organization for implementation. Often the prospective innovators expect others to be excited by the idea, seize upon it, and enthusiastically carry it forward. They believe the idea will sell itself. This almost *never* happens.

The idea, however powerful, is more likely to be greeted by yawns and glazed stares. It needs to be nurtured, strengthened, and sold. It is an idea not psychologically owned by anyone other than the people who generated it. It is not understood, and often there are many other “good ideas” floating around. Human and organizational momentum are likely to keep things headed in their current direction. The mere introduction of a new, raw idea is unlikely to break this inertia.

To nurture the idea, it is helpful to take it out for carefully controlled test walks, that is, talking about it with people (but not decision makers) who were not involved in the generation of the idea. What may feel clear and obvious to the person who invested so much time in the process may not be easily transmitted. Practice in helping others to understand the idea will pay off. So will piloting the idea quietly in a corner. Learning as much as possible about it in order to defend it will help in exciting others about it.

PERFORMING A GAP ANALYSIS

It is still not time to press for introducing the idea. What might well be seen as a third phase of idea selection, a *gap analysis*, must be completed. This is an effort to analyze the current status of the area of concern and compare it with where the new idea would take it. Such a comparison will help determine the size of the gap between the current and proposed states.

Up to this point, a good deal of effort has been made to protect the creative process from the organizational environment. Although *creativity* flourishes in such a protected state, *innovation*—real organizational or marketplace change—cannot occur in isolation.

A full understanding of the gaps involved in turning the creative idea into an innovation may result in several alternatives:

- The idea may be accepted.
- The idea may be rejected because the gap is truly too large. Another idea that seems more likely to succeed may be selected.
- A whole new creative process may be initiated to look at *how* to close the gap in nontraditional ways.
- It may become clear that more work must be done on the environment prior to the introduction of *any* idea.

At this stage, it may be helpful to involve others who are particularly aware of and effective in managing organizational and marketplace issues. A champion—someone with a hurdler mentality—to guide the idea forward with zeal could be most helpful.

PREPARING THE ENVIRONMENT TO FOSTER INNOVATION

In the Model for Innovation, the second bubble surrounding the process illustrates the critical role the environment plays in the success or failure of the innovative efforts. Even when the innovative idea is ready—like an unborn baby—to be brought into the world, it is still a delicate child. Just as the human infant needs proper nutrition and a lot of care, the innovative effort needs support and a problem-solving mentality.

For a child to develop fully, it must take risks. In learning to walk, it will risk falls. In order to become independent adults, children require parents to commit resources, provide challenges, and experience stress. In order for someone to succeed at innovation, he or she must risk challenges to the status quo, significant stress to the parent organization, and even failure.

In the Model for Innovation, action plans and contingency plans must be developed, and the action plan must be implemented.

Developing Action and Contingency Plans

Once the gap analysis is complete and an idea is selected, an explicit action plan is needed. The process of innovation too frequently falters because of inadequate implementation, which in turn is tied to a lack of action planning. A set of contingency plans may also need to be developed in case key variables fail to occur exactly as anticipated.

The action plan should be specific. It may involve pilot tests, staged presentations, or whatever is necessary to assure that the creative idea will become an organizational or marketplace innovation.

Key people who must support the innovation should be integrated into the process at this stage, and the plan will likely need to be readjusted to accommodate their input. A strong champion will *not* allow the idea to be swallowed up by organizational realities but will constantly push for priority treatment, fruitful compromise, and alternative solutions.

Implementing the Action Plan

Implementing the action plan with drive and creativity is crucial. The story of organizational or marketplace innovation includes creativity as a constant in the process. Although creativity is critical during the idea-generation stage, it is also necessary throughout the process. Many more forces will stop or slow a potential innovation than will advance it. The champion—or champions—will be called on regularly to use their creativity in order to continue moving forward.

Drive is important, but timing is critical to most innovative efforts. Most organizations tend to slow the process of innovation; unfortunately, they often end up with an innovative product or service that is too late to benefit the organization.

Building an organization that fosters innovation is a major effort. It involves resource-allocation decisions, human resource selection and development commitments, strategic planning, and strategic management. It requires not simply proper management, but also quality leadership. We know of no solid examples of innovative organizations that are devoid of strong leadership—leadership that creates expectations that call for innovation and support.

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■ DEVELOPING SUCCESSFUL JOB AIDS

Allison Rossett and Jeannette Gautier-Downes

WHAT IS A JOB AID?

The human memory is not infallible, and everyone relies on “memory joggers” such as lists, calendars, directories, and instruction sheets in their professional and personal lives. The primary function of such memory joggers is to supply information that is essential for accomplishing a task but that does not need to be memorized in order to complete the task successfully.

In organizations, “memory joggers” are known as job aids and have evolved into much more sophisticated forms with a wide range of uses. As defined by human resource development (HRD) professionals, a job aid is a repository for information, processes, or perspectives that is external to the individual and that supports work and activity by directing, guiding, and enlightening performance. Job aids enable people to plan, to execute, and to evaluate work; they give specific, ordered instructions to workers in situations in which an error would be catastrophic; and they enhance enthusiasm and confidence as resources for necessary information and guidance.

As guides, job aids provide steps, illustrations, and examples that keep performance on track. For example, creating a new voice message for a telephone answering machine is an occasional activity for many people; the steps are familiar but are not committed to memory. In this case, an illustrated document guides the user through the steps. Job aids are found on shelves above employees’ desks, on walls beside equipment and chemicals, in drawers beneath computer keyboards, and underneath telephones. Because job aids are separate and can be relied on when the need arises, the individual is not forced to rely on memory.

Job aids also support the more informal parts of people’s lives. Cookbooks, shopping lists, to-do lists, personal calendars, planners, and address books all enable people to meet mundane and personal needs without committing information and details to memory.

Not everything connected with a job is a job aid. For example, tools are not job aids and instruction is not a job aid. Tools, like screwdrivers and office chairs, often are confused with job aids because they support people in their work. However, there

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is an important distinction between tools and job aids: Tools are used by people in performing jobs; job aids are repositories for information. Bookmarks, pencils, tractors, hard hats, and file cabinets are tools; user documentation, safety signs, and procedure lists are job aids.

JOB AIDS AND HRD TRAINING

Job aids contribute to the HRD function in the following ways:

Promoting Clarity. Before employing job aids, key questions should be asked: What do employees need to know? In detail, what skills, knowledge, and perspectives are essential? What goals and objectives must be achieved? What information or action makes a difference? What policies, procedures, or approaches are essential? Effective job aids cannot be written for undefined content, intangible goals, or murky procedures.

Reducing the Length of Training. Job aids reduce the time needed for training—in a way. If the content and objectives are held stable—that is, if no more skills, knowledge, or perspectives are added—then training time can be reduced through job aids. However, as the nature of work expands, training is expected to have more impact on the individual in the same period of time. This is where job aids can help. Research findings support the contention that training can be reduced when job aids supplant or supplement instructor-led training.

Improving the Quality of Training. Time within a training session that is devoted to introducing and coaching people on the use of job aids is likely to be perceived as relevant to actual work, both by the employees and by their supervisors. During a classroom practice exercise, for instance, if salespeople are asked to use reference manuals to check product and peripheral compatibilities, they are likely to perceive the training to be very much like the kind of challenges they confront when selling.

Helping with the Transfer of Training. Job aids help employees to transfer their skills from the classroom to the work site. For example, in a fast-food restaurant, employee familiarity with and reliance on job aids are included as part of a manager's presentation on the use of a new machine that prepares French fries. Then the same job aids accompany the employees back to the kitchen and to the demands of French-fry cutting and cooking. Increasing the common elements between the classroom and the job increases the likelihood of skill transfer and improves work performance.

Easing the Transfer of Personnel. Based on his research, Duncan (1985) reports that maintenance personnel who have been trained with job aids transfer more effectively from one type of operation to another.

Simplifying the Revision of Training. Although it is not easy to retrieve and revise existing job aids, this approach is much easier than altering the skills and knowledge that reside in the mind of each employee. In addition, revisions are made

easier by the increasing reliance on computers in organizations. With a few keystrokes, people can bring job aids up-to-date and then disseminate the information electronically.

Expanding the Roles for Training and Development Practitioners. Many people believe that the job of an HRD practitioner is to provide whatever an organization requests. Too often this belief has resulted in an attempt to use training for challenges that training cannot solve. The planning, development, and use of job aids has the potential to contribute to an expanded perception of the following aspects of HRD:

1. That HRD is based on needs assessment, a systematic inquiry process that analyzes learners, jobs, and subject matter prior to recommending or implementing appropriate solutions.
2. That different kinds of problems and challenges should be addressed by different solutions. Figure 1 makes this point by pairing problems and interventions.
3. That solutions usually are multifaceted; involve whole systems; and include potential changes in job descriptions, tools, job aids, training, and incentives.

KINDS OF PROBLEMS	KINDS OF INTERVENTIONS
Lack of skills/knowledge	Training Job aids Coaching and mentoring
Flawed incentives	New policies New contracts Training for supervisor
Flawed environment	Work redesign New and better tools Better matches between jobs and people
Lack of motivation	Information about benefits Testimonials regarding value Training to build confidence

Figure 1. Matching Problems with Interventions

STEPS FOR DEVELOPING JOB AIDS

The job-aid development process includes the following six steps:

1. Clarify the problem to be solved by the job aid.
2. Choose the format and medium.
3. Prepare a draft of the job aid.
4. Pilot the job aid.
5. Make revisions to the job aid.
6. Manage the job aid.

As stated previously, training—and job aids—are not panaceas for every organizational ill. These steps assume that a job aid has already been determined to be the appropriate solution to the problem. Descriptions and illustrations of the preceding six steps follow.

Step One: Clarify the Problem To Be Solved by the Job Aid

As is the case with any training, the first step in developing a job aid is to identify and focus on the problem to be solved. Data collection for job-aid development should follow the natural and usually chronological progression of the job or task. Typically, the job-aid developer tries to determine the best way of approaching the job, the common errors or misjudgments made by users, and the kind and level of help needed by the user.

Information can be collected in three ways: through observations, through interviews, and through performance of the job or task by the developer of the job aid. When possible, all three methods of collecting information should be used. The emphasis and time spent on each type of data collection technique will depend on the job, task, or mental process involved. Observations should be emphasized when the job or task is observable; interviews should be emphasized when the job or task relies on mental processes such as decision making. Another useful technique is for the developer to actually do the job.

After the plan for gathering information has been developed, the observer or interviewer contacts the manager or supervisor of the people who will be observed or interviewed. This is important to ensure access to the job performers.

Observations. Job observations usually include two phases. First, the job-aid developer reviews the information that supports the job or task. This information might include documentation, policy and procedure manuals, training manuals, and information about errors or customer complaints. This observation often is completed during the initial needs-assessment stage. The information found in these documents focuses observations at the job site.

The second phase of observation takes place at the job site. There the developer can see how the job is performed in the work environment by expert, typical, and novice performers. At this stage, the developer takes explicit notes and records deviations from the model's or expert's approach to the job.

Interviews. The interview provides an opportunity for the developer to build from observations and to delve more deeply into differences or similarities in performance and outcome. The interview is the developer's primary tool for collecting information about the process, for finding out what the performer is thinking and feeling, and for shedding light on decision making. Interviews, unlike observations, provide flexibility because there are opportunities for the interviewer to ask for clarification. Interviews also create a personal connection between the developer and the performer that might encourage use of the job aid once it is completed.

Interviews answer the following questions:

- What is the performer thinking about while performing the job or task?
- What kinds of information and details do performers need?
- Why did the performer do it that way? Why are others approaching the job differently?
- Might special circumstances arise to change the way that the job or task is performed or approached?
- Are there steps or stages that are particularly difficult or often forgotten?
- How would the performer feel about using a job aid?

When a job or task cannot be observed directly, a two-phase interview is useful. In the first phase, the developer asks general and open-ended questions to get an overview of the process and to determine differences between experts and novices; the performer responds spontaneously. Some organizations assemble panels of experts for this stage of the process. These panels "quickly gather information, dispense information, and build affiliation" (Rossett, 1987, p. 176).

The second stage seeks more specific information and employs more directed questions. For example, during the first phase of interviews with people who write for non-English speakers, the interviewer might have learned that "When finished writing a document for non-English speakers, I always review the document to make sure that I have used simple sentences." The developer might follow up in the second interview with questions such as "What do you consider to be a simple sentence? How many words does it have? How long are the words? Are there any exceptions?" The answers to both phases of questions have obvious implications for the job aid.

Performance of the job. When the job aid developer actually performs the job, he or she gains a deeper understanding of the data gathered in the interviews and observations. The developer can use personal trials to identify tricky or confusing steps or processes. This step is especially useful when developing job aids for novice users because, in many ways, the developer is a novice. Personal performance reveals some of the same problems that novices will encounter. Of course, in certain cases, personal trials are impossible because the job is dangerous or because it

requires special skills. In these cases, the developer must rely more heavily on observations and interviews.

After collecting data from observations and interviews, and from performing the job, the developer uses the characteristics of the job to create the job aid. Because the job aid needs to follow the logical order of the job, the developer watches the process or procedure from start to finish as the job is performed in the work environment, always asking the performer about what he or she does or is thinking about in order to perform the job. This process transforms debates over philosophies and theories into data about what to do, what to consider, and how to accomplish the task.

Before: What Does the Performer Need To Know, Do, or Have In Order To Do the Job or Task? At this point, the developer identifies the prerequisites for doing the job. Because job aids are about performance, it is best to start by watching a worker prepare to do the job. The developer must consider the following: Is everything established prior to the performance? Is location important? For example, does the user need to do the job on a flat surface or in a cool or quiet place? The developer looks for similarities and differences in the ways that novices and experts prepare. He or she lists or describes the preparation process and notes the names of any tools used and perhaps jots brief descriptions or sketches of these tools. Should the preparation stage be included as part of the job aid or should it be supported by an additional job aid, by training, or by a presentation from a supervisor?

During: What Is the Typical Method? Are There Special Circumstances or Safety Considerations? The developer determines how the person actually performs the job or task. He or she considers the following: What are the major steps or skills needed to perform the job? How is the job usually accomplished? The developer asks the performer to do what he or she would usually do if no one were observing and notes every observable action in detail. During the observation or just after it, the developer asks the performer about what he or she is thinking. How does the performer approach the problem? How does he or she proceed to solve the problem? What do they do or think about and in what order? Does every performer follow the same order? Does it matter? Do certain circumstances dictate that the performer must follow different steps? Might a condition arise to warrant developing a supporting job aid, such as a job aid for “saving information to a disk”? What if the inserted disk is full? How is that handled? How is another disk inserted? What if the user lacks another formatted disk?

After: What Must the User Do After Completing the Job or Task? What does the performer do once the widget is assembled or the program is debugged or the performance appraisal is completed? Are there any special precautions or reminders? These endnotes or final steps are especially useful for novice users who may not understand the entire process or who may be more likely to fumble a particular step and therefore need to recheck their work more carefully.

For more detailed information on needs assessment, the reader is referred to *Training Needs Assessment* (Rossett, 1987).

Step Two: Choose the Format and Medium

The job or task is the key to choosing a format. The following seven formats for job aids are possible:

1. *Steps*. The step format presents information, directions, and activities in sequence. This format is appropriate when the job-aid developer wants to ensure a flow of actions, in a particular order, for a narrowly defined purpose.
2. *Work Sheets*. The work-sheet format is also characterized by steps that must be performed in sequence. In addition, work sheets require the user to participate in substantive written responses, usually in the form of calculations. The main purpose of the work sheet is to generate the result of the calculations.
3. *Arrays*. Arrays present bodies of information with meaningful organization and structure. This format allows the user to access large bodies of data, generally to support the completion of a larger job or task. The user of an array-type job aid is attempting to answer one of three questions: who, what, or where?
4. *Decision Tables*. Decision tables represent “if-then” situations. This format allows the user to identify solutions for given problems based on the conditions of the situation. The decision table is used when the problem includes several conditions that influence the selection of the correct answer or action.
5. *Flow Charts*. The flow-chart format is a sequence of questions that can be answered with “yes” or “no.” When the user answers “yes” or “no,” an appropriate path to the next decision is indicated. The performer follows the question path until enough information is gathered to reach a conclusive end.
6. *Checklists*. Like most job aids, the checklist format enables the user not to rely on memory. This format is distinct, however, in that its main purpose is to prompt the user to think about a job or task in a certain way. Checklist job aids are often used to list critical information that the user must consider or verify before, during, or after performing a job or task.
7. *Combinations*. The formats mentioned previously may be combined. For example, an operating-room attendant needs to follow a strict series of steps for preparing the operating room for a particular procedure that is performed infrequently. One of the steps on the list might be “Check that all surgical instruments are on the surgeon’s tray.” If many instruments are required, the job aid might include a separate checklist for ensuring that each instrument has been accounted for.

Other important considerations include the following: Who will be using the job aid? What is the working environment? What resources are available?

Who Will Be Using the Job Aid?

How Experienced Are the Users? Job aids developed for novice performers or frequently changing users often require more detail.

How Well Can the Users Read or Understand English? Statistics show that nearly 25 percent of all English-speaking adults are functionally illiterate. Therefore, it may be beneficial to augment the job aid with graphics, audiotapes, or videotapes.

With What Kind of Documentation Is the User Familiar? When documentation is commonplace for a job, use a familiar format. For example, computer programmers often use flow charts to depict the development of a program. Therefore, given the choice of a decision-table or a flow-chart job aid, the developer would choose a flow chart. A job aid should blend into the work environment; the user should not be forced to struggle with an unfamiliar format.

Does the User Want to Perform? A job aid is not an appropriate tool for erasing employee resistance, because the employee probably will not use it.

What Is the Working Environment?

Where Will the Job Aid Be Used? Whether the user will be fixing a sink, working in the dark, or at a computer terminal will influence the developer's choice of job aid. Information about the environment in which the job aid will be used helps to determine the best medium.

What Job-Aid Development Resources Are Available?

Who Will Help to Create the Job Aid? When planning a job aid, the developer needs to recruit people with appropriate expertise for the effort. Job-aid development might require a team consisting of the following:

- Instructional designers, training specialists, or human resource development professionals;
- Graphic artists;
- Subject-matter experts; and
- Computer programmers for online job aids.

How Much Time Is Available? Sometimes a job aid is needed to solve an immediate problem; in this case, a "quick-and-dirty" job aid may be appropriate. This kind of job aid solves the problem at hand and often is redeveloped when time allows.

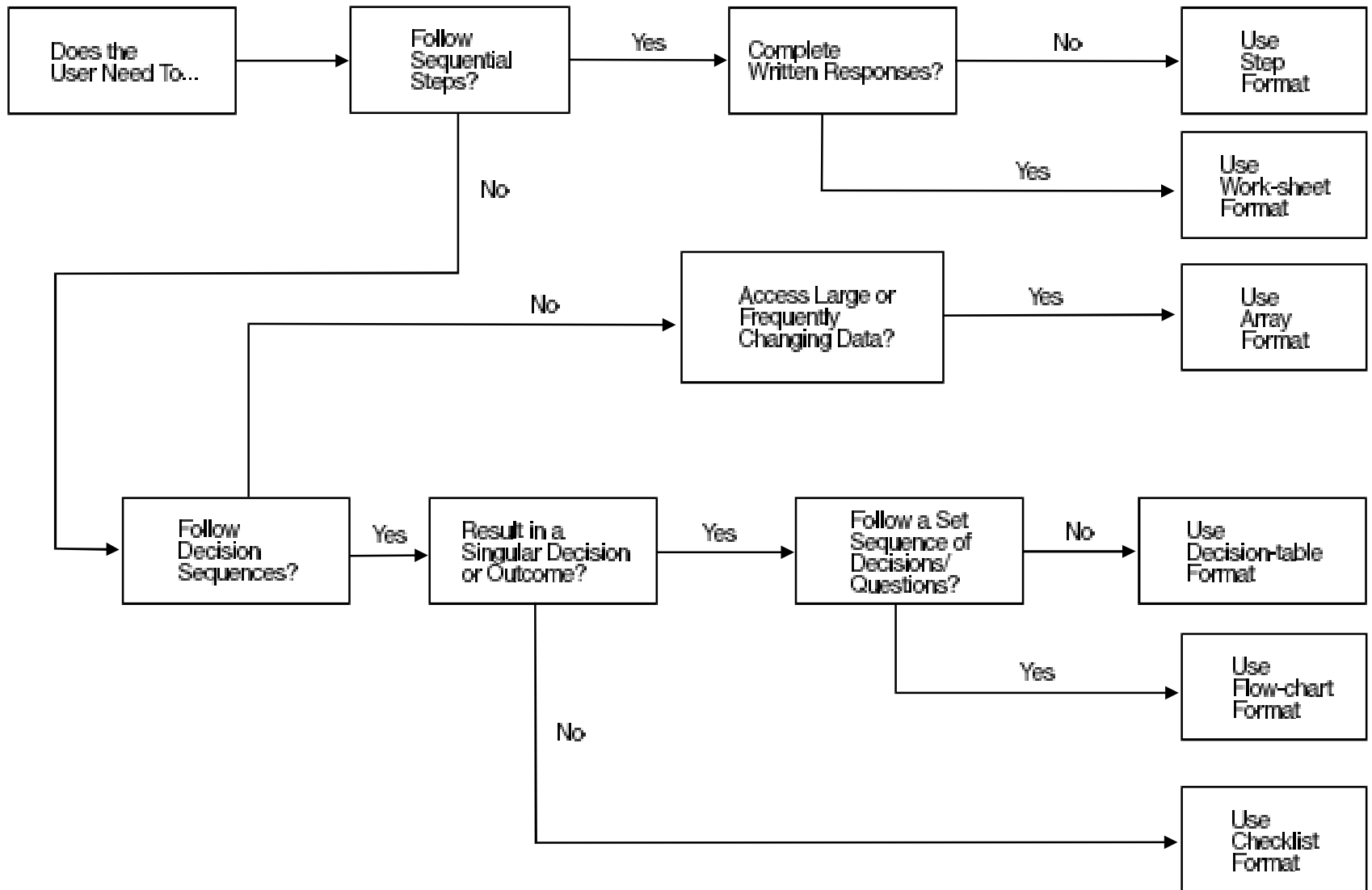


Figure 2. How To Select the Appropriate Format for a Job Aid

How Much More Has Been Allocated to the Development Process? Job aids are less expensive than training. Harless (1988) suggests that job aids are three to four times less expensive than training. He notes that the real savings happen because workers remain at the site and are productive, as opposed to training sessions, during which workers are absent and nonproductive. When the costs of sending people to training sessions—travel, fees, meals, and so on—are combined, the impact of job aids on the bottom line is striking.

Choose the Format

The work completed thus far should provide a clear picture of the job or task. The following steps are used to determine the format:

1. Decide what part of the task or job is being supported by the job aid.
2. Consider the data about the user’s background, level of experience, and previous experience with documentation.
3. Use Figure 2 to determine which format or combination of formats is best.

Choose the Medium

Cost is a factor when choosing a medium. For example, an on-line job aid is much more expensive than a printed one. The medium is determined after the format, the working environment, and any budgetary constraints have been considered. Figure 3 serves as a guide for choosing a medium.

	Print-Poster	Extended Print	On-Line	Audio	Video
Step Format	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Work-Sheet Format	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
Array Format	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Decision-Table Format	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Flow-Chart Format	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Checklist Format	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

Figure 3. The Match Between Job-Aid Formats and Media

Step Three: Prepare a Draft of the Job Aid

The development team needs to be called together. When the team consists only of a designer and a subject-matter expert, this time is used to organize information. If the team is larger, the initial session is used to explain the process of drafting a job aid, including explanations of how the format and medium were chosen and the role that each person will play. It may also be useful to mention budget and time constraints.

The information collected in step one is used to break each major task into smaller subordinate steps or skills. As an example, one step in completing an automobile tune-up is to replace the spark plugs. By observing a mechanic performing a tune-up, the developer witnessed the procedure for removing spark plugs. Through interviews, the developer learned that one of the subordinate steps for replacing spark plugs is to choose the appropriate replacement spark plug. The interviewer also learned that the novice performer might be unsure about which spark plug to use because the code numbers differ from brand to brand. Therefore, for the step "Replace spark plugs," the developer must include a decision-table job aid to ensure that the novice chooses the correct spark plug every time. This also might require meeting with a subject-matter expert to determine considerations for the decision table. By breaking the job into small steps and substeps, the developer provides prompts when the user needs them.

The developer of a job aid usually begins by listing the steps or information the user needs in order to complete the task. If order is important, the developer puts the steps in the correct order. Then, if the process is a decision sequence, the developer lists all possible conditions and the appropriate responses. After listing all of the routine steps, the developer identifies circumstances in which special circumstances might arise, making an effort to account for every possible situation that the user might encounter while doing the job or task. Zagorski (1987) suggests that the developer should include with the job aid a list of steps or information that the user will need immediately after having completed the job or task. For example, a final note on a job aid for preparing bulk-mail packages might read, "You are now ready to bring your mail to the 'Bulk Mail' Department of the Central Post Office." This step is not actually a part of the preparation of bulk-mail packages, but it is a crucial part of the overall process. Other needed "post-information" may be drawn from common errors. For example, every step of the U.S. Federal Income Tax work sheet is supported by a thorough explanation; however, a final job aid is printed on the return envelope that reads, "Sign the return? Organize your schedules and forms in proper order? Use your pre-printed label? Keep a copy for your records?" These crucial last steps are often overlooked. Sometimes a single statement will suffice. At other times, a developer may choose to supplement a job aid, based on what he or she knows about the users.

In the last part of the process, the developer creates a rough draft of the primary job aid, using the chosen format. Statements should be drafted and redrafted to eliminate extra words, to combine ideas that belong together, and to eliminate ideas

that are ambiguous. This draft is crucial because it provides the infrastructure for the job aid. The statements must be as clean and pithy as possible. Before giving the job aid to a graphic artist, the developer should ask a subject-matter expert to review it for accuracy.

Specific Rules for Job-Aid Development

Step Job Aids. The step format is used for jobs that require the user to follow steps in sequence; that sequence must be clear. The steps are numbered or lettered, with each step representing only one process or procedure.

Work-Sheet Job Aids. The worksheet format also requires the user to follow steps in sequence. Again, that sequence must be clear, with each step of the calculation numbered or lettered. The user should be able to separate the work sheet easily from the documentation that supports it. It is cumbersome to require the user to turn back and forth between instructions and the work sheet.

Array Job Aids. The array format is used for jobs that require the user to refer to bodies of information. The data need to be organized in a logical format with obvious meaning, either based on their nature or on the structure of demands that users will place on the data. Because the array format is often used for data that change frequently, the user needs to know the specific version of data that the job aid fits. For example, computer software manufacturers distribute mats that fit over computer keyboards and correspond to function keys. In order for the job aid to be effective, the user needs to know which version of software the mat accompanies.

Decision-Table Job Aids. Decision tables are developed by working backward. After deciding where the user will finish, the job-aid developer identifies the factors that lead the user to that point. First, this process involves listing all possible solutions or responses to *if* statements; the responses are then statements. Second, the conditions or chain of factors that lead to solutions or responses need to be determined. Third, the number of columns needed can be determined by adding the categories of possible conditions and responses or by adding the *if*, *and*, and *then* statements.

For example, in Figure 4, the conditions from which the personnel clerk will determine which benefits brochure to provide are the following:

1. If the department is . . .
2. And the employee is hourly,
3. Then provide brochure number . . .

In this case, the table must contain three columns.

Department	Hourly Employee	Benefits Brochure No.
Maintenance	Yes	123
	No	50
Housekeeping	Yes	136
	No	52
Food Service	Yes	148
	No	53
Sales	Yes	152
	No	54

Figure 4. Decision-Table Job Aid for Choosing a Benefits Brochure

Fourth, the conditions are listed in the order that they probably will occur on the job. In the preceding example, the personnel clerk gets clues about the employee's department from his or her uniform. Because the personnel clerk sees the employee's uniform first, this condition is first. The personnel clerk then must ask the employee whether he or she is hourly or salaried. Therefore, this condition is presented second.

Fifth, the job-aid developer must ensure that each decision sequence leads to only one possible answer. If a decision sequence has more than one possible answer, a checklist format should be used. Finally, it is important to keep in mind that column headers are best written as open-ended statements or questions.

Flow Charts. The process for drafting a flow chart is similar to the process for drafting a decision table. The job-aid developer lists all possible solutions or responses; these statements define the end of the sequence. For example, Figure 5 leads the user to one of two possible solutions: "Rent a House or Apartment" or "Buy a House."

A series of binary (true/false or yes/no) questions are devised that lead to each of the possible solutions or responses. In Figure 5, the following questions were used: Do you want to own a house? Are there affordable houses in the area in which you wish to live? Do you have the "up-front" money (down payment, closing costs, and so on)? Do you plan to stay in the area for at least one year?

Next, a diagram is drawn that represents the progression of statements leading to the end response. The flow chart will look more ordered when the lines are horizontal and vertical, not diagonal (Harless, 1988).

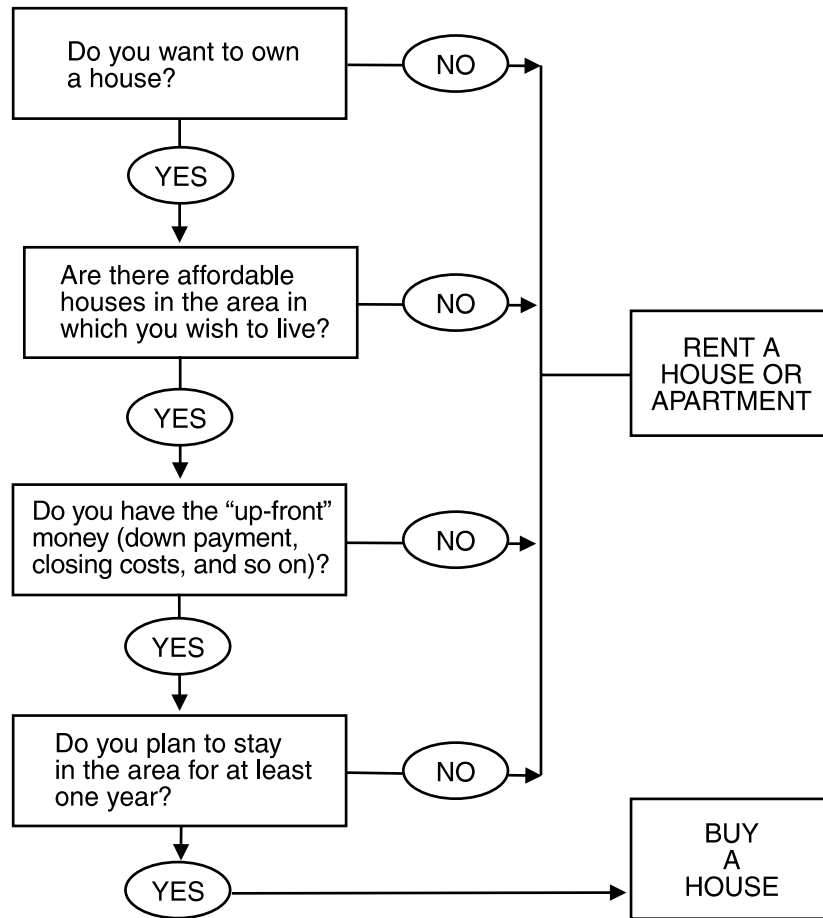


Figure 5. Flow-Chart Job Aid for Choosing To Buy or Rent a House or Apartment

Checklists. The job-aid developer lists the conditions or structures the questions in the order in which the user should consider them; if there is some clear progression of information, it is used to structure the job aid. The checklist must provide enough information to guide the user to the appropriate solution. When appropriate, the range of possible answers or responses is described. Checklists do not always lead to a single response but may lead to a range of responses. If this range is defined, it should be included. For example, a book on proper nutrition during pregnancy provides categories of foods that must be represented in a woman’s diet. These categories include proteins, calcium-rich foods, and so on. If a dietitian were using this book, this list would suffice. The average user, however, would need examples of the foods within these categories.

Step Four: Pilot the Job Aid

Pilot testing is the process whereby the developer tries out the job aid with “real-world” end users. The developer must keep in mind that if the job aid is confusing, unclear, or inaccessible, it will not be used.

First, the developer must choose a test group that is representative of end users. The group should represent the full range of performers. In the pilot test, the developer implements the job aid as if it were being released in final form. If the job aid will be taped to an instrument panel or chained to the side of a conveyor belt, the job aid should be pilot tested there. The developer should ask employees to use the job aid to perform the task, observe their performance, and interview them about the performance and outcomes.

The checklist shown in Figure 6 can help the developer to identify any problems with the job aid.

Step Five: Make Revisions to the Job Aid

The developer should use the information collected in step four to develop the final version of the job aid. After all revisions have been implemented, a final signoff from subject-matter experts and management should be obtained, and the master copy of the job aid should be developed. The job aid then can be reproduced and packaged for the kind of distribution that has been selected to support it.

Step Six: Manage the Job Aid

To be successful, a job aid must be managed and carefully integrated into the work environment. The first task in managing a job aid is to develop strategies to increase the chances that the job aid will be used, both initially and over time.

The fast-changing environments that make job aids desirable also threaten their usefulness over time. Job aids swiftly lose credibility if they fail to keep up with the challenges and tools that they must support. Job-aid management must institutionalize ways for a job aid to change as people and their work environments change.

People. As the work force changes, does the job aid continue to meet the new work-force needs? Are orientation, training, and coaching systems in place to help new employees to use the job aid successfully?

Work Environment. Who is responsible for introducing the initial job aid? When a new product or procedure is adopted, are revisions to job aids automatic and mandatory? How will the organization keep track of all the job aids already in existence? Is there a budget for revisions? These issues suggest the need for a systematic approach to the management of job aids and their revisions.

The Job Aid. Job aids should clearly indicate the date of the latest revision. Snow and Newby (1989) stress the importance of making the job aid accessible to all employees when they need it. Supply more than enough job aids for every employee or work station. If a user must rely on many job aids, each job aid must be discernible from the others.

Ask the user:

1. Do you have any questions?
2. Were you unsure at any time?
3. Were there steps that were harder to follow than others?
4. Was the job aid difficult to use at your work station?
5. Were the instructions clear?
6. Were the steps ordered correctly?
7. Were there times when you needed more information?
8. Were there times when there was too much information?
9. Was the wording of the job aid clear?
10. Were the diagrams or graphs helpful?
11. Were there typographical errors?
12. Did a circumstance arise that was not covered in the job aid?
13. Should any special circumstances be covered in the job aid?
14. Will you use it again?
15. Do you wish that you and your colleagues had a copy of this job aid?

Figure 6. Pilot Testing Job Aids

Revision System. A systematic approach to managing revision should address the issues below:

- **Initiation.** Who is responsible for initialing revisions? Are revisions initiated through periodic reviews or linked to changes in procedure and/or technology? Can managers request revisions easily?
- **Implementation.** Who implements revisions? Who collects outdated versions and introduces new versions?
- **Administration.** Who keeps track of existing job aids? Can the organization list the units and positions that use a particular job aid? Does everyone understand the authority and responsibility structure surrounding job aids? Is there a budget for job-aid revision?
- **Incentives.** Who receives recognition when job aids are successful? Who is acknowledged for their proper introduction, maintenance, and revision?

JOB AIDS AND ORGANIZATIONAL TRENDS

A variety of forces are influencing present and future job aids, including organizational shifts, demographic shifts, cost pressures, integrated work and performance systems, a growing emphasis on performance and accomplishment, and computer technologies.

Organizational Shifts. As organizations become more customer and market responsive, service and promptness become critical to their success. Job aids, especially automated informational and coaching aids, will enable organizations to meet customer demands. Likewise, organizations are emphasizing quality, which requires a wider dissemination of information throughout the organization. Job aids will be major players in this expanding access to information. Finally, organizations are becoming flatter, with fewer middle managers to ensure productivity. As surrogates for supervisors' experience and expertise, job aids can be used to prompt and guide employees and to enlighten their performance.

Demographic Shifts. The work force is becoming increasingly female, minority, limited in English proficiency, and elderly. Futurists express concern about weak skills—especially in science and math—and inadequate English proficiency. Organizations increasingly are pressured to solve the problems that public schools and government agencies have failed to address; unfortunately, they probably will not do so. Instead, organizations probably will rely more and more heavily on job aids, which can provide information, specify detailed procedures, and coach performance within the work context and at prices perceived as affordable.

Cost Pressures. Most organizations see “cost,” not “return on investment,” when they examine training and development. Job aids, with their ability to diminish costs and to provide ongoing support for people on the job, will be assigned expanded roles.

Integrated Work and Performance Systems. The traditional role of training often is perceived as distinct from the world of work. However, in the future, the distinctions among systems, training, and documentation and the distinctions between work and training will blur. Training and development concepts, along with job aids, are expected to insinuate themselves earlier, continually, and seamlessly into the flow of work and the systems that support it.

Emphasis on Performance and Accomplishment. The orientation of human resources inevitably must shift to focus on the organizational goal and on helping employees to contribute to that goal. This new perspective will lead to an increased reliance on job aids.

Computer Technologies. Computer technology is now readily accessible to the instructional designer and to the human resources manager. It is impossible to overestimate the impact that decreased prices, increased speed, enhanced memory, and friendlier and more accessible systems will have on the future of job aids.

Clearly, job aids will become more and more important to organizations over the coming years. HRD professionals who become job-aid development and usage experts will better meet the needs of organizations and of the people who rely on job aids to do their work.

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■ THE CHANGING ORGANIZATION: NEW CHALLENGES FOR HRD PROFESSIONALS AND MANAGERS

Robert William Lucas

Abstract: In the past few decades, dramatic economic and technological changes have led to equally dramatic changes in the business environment. One resulting challenge for the HRD professional is finding and hiring employees who have basic business skills. Another is ongoing job training for managers and employees. New technologies and process reengineering require job retraining and motivational training. As the educational system is less able to provide the requisite knowledge and skills for workers and as the work force becomes more diverse, organizations have to spend larger portions of their budgets on training.

One way in which HRD professionals can help to meet this need is to establish alliances and partnerships with other businesses, governmental agencies, and educational institutions. In addition, HRD professionals need to be able to conduct business-needs analyses as well as training-needs analyses; they need to be able to envision trends, guide organizational change, and train people at all levels of the organization to deal with the shifting requirements of the organizational environment.

In the past decades, there have been dramatic changes in technology, the international arena, and workplace demographics, all of which have greatly affected the ways in which organizations do business. There have been continual changes in society, the economy, and managerial roles. Changes in organizational structures resulting from mergers, consolidations, and expansions have become the rule, rather than the exception. Not since the industrial revolution has the creation of new industries, organizations, products, and services been so pervasive and so rapid in response to change.

CHANGES OVER THE PAST DECADES

Toffler (1990) observed that following World War II, the United States came to realize an age of expansion and improvement unparalleled by most countries. Having survived the war with its industry and borders intact, a steady period of growth began and lasted until the 1960s. Along with the Soviet Union, whose desire for technology plunged it into a period of near chaotic change in 1989, the U.S. dominated world power.

During that period, employees were content to work for one company for most of their adult lives and be rewarded with “retirement nest eggs.” The U.S. became the

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dominant world force in areas of production and service. Because U.S. companies did not fear foreign competition, production slowed—compared to other countries—and service began to decline. The U.S. went from being one of the world's largest creditors to being its largest debtor nation in a few decades.

In the 1970s, the contentment of being part of the “Great Society” turned to fear of oil shortages and unemployment. Events were set into motion that led to a major recession in which: a) more financial institutions failed than at any time since the depression; b) bankruptcy declarations became commonplace; c) employers began seeking solutions to a changing work ethic and diverse work force; and d) the quality of products and services declined.

Peters (1987) found that during the 1980s, the U.S. gross national product (GNP) slipped behind that of Japan, West Germany, Switzerland, and several other European nations. During the same period, the U.S. service industry lost most of the \$41 billion in positive trade balance it once held.

To deal with and survive this shift, organizations began campaigns to motivate and reeducate employees and the public. They began to adopt a proactive approach to counter what was perceived as a downward spiral for U.S. business and to attack rather than defend the status quo. Slogans such as Chrysler's “The Pride Is Back” and Ford's “Quality Is Job One” exemplified this approach.

The state of the economy and lack of distribution of appropriate knowledge experienced in the 1990s are not solely the result of lack of forethought on the part of industry leaders of the past. Many things have contributed to these problems. Still, experts believe it will take more than a change in economics to correct the problems. Toffler (1990) believes for example, that neither Keynesian nor Monetarist economics alone can increase global effectiveness, curb unemployment, or reverse change.

With all the turbulence occurring in the business environment, managers of the future, according to Drucker (1980), will have to develop “strategies for tomorrow, strategies that anticipate where the greatest changes are likely to occur and what they are likely to be, strategies that enable a business...to take advantage of new realities” (p. 4).

WHAT IS NEEDED?

The challenges of a fast-changing environment include the need for constantly updated personnel training. McElwain (1991) suggests that as much as 42 percent (50 million) of the workers currently employed in the U.S. are in need of additional training to develop them on personal and professional levels and to enhance their attitudes toward work. In current dollar figures, this new training, coupled with existing training, could have a total annual cost of \$45 billion.

Traditionally, corporate leaders have eliminated training when budget cuts were necessary because training was viewed as a cost that did not provide tangible

returns. Recently, this view has been changing through the efforts of the American Society for Training and Development, the National Society for Performance and Instruction, the Society of Human Resource Managers, some educational institutions, and legions of human resource and training practitioners. As a result of their efforts, many organizations are dedicating larger percentages of their budgets to personnel procurement and development in efforts to select and train employees who can deal with the complex issues and technologies of today.

Additionally, more managers realize that their employees need training and education. They are also investing sizeable amounts of time, energy, and resources to conduct training needs analyses prior to implementing training programs. Through this impetus, employees are learning new skills that allow them to perform more effectively in their new or reshaped work settings and to produce quality products and/or services. A Japanese axiom succinctly summarizes the benefits of training: “Quality control starts with training and ends with training.”

According to a joint study conducted by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) and the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) (Carnevale, Gainer, & Meltzer, 1990), many of the largest companies in the U.S. currently spend about 2 percent of their payrolls on training and development. Even so, the study recommends that more money be dedicated to employee training—possibly as much as 4 percent. This proposed amount would equal an annual increase of \$14 billion for formal training and would include 10 to 15 percent more employees. Although this sum may seem large, it is only about one-tenth of the amount that employers spend yearly on facilities and technology.

THE NEW EMPHASIS ON TRAINING

A lack of updated training practices has created myriad dysfunctions in organizational systems. For years, the U.S. has depended too heavily on an overburdened academic and vocational training system to pump newly qualified applicants into the job market. A great many of these applicants do not have the basic skills needed by employers or the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to deal with technical and service issues. According to the ASTD-DOL study, employers are requiring more of their employees in the way of technical knowledge, basic skills (reading, writing, learning) and personal-relations skills. Because many applicants do not possess these skills, employers are buying or developing training programs to teach them. In addition, they are spending billions of dollars each year to train their managers and supervisors in order to better equip them to cope with the challenges of a diverse work force and a changing work environment.

Training and retraining have become paramount issues with most employers and employees because of their desire to stay in step with economic and technical change and to remain competitive. As more people acknowledge this trend, more money is likely to be put into providing training. Carnevale et al (1990) estimate that in 1990,

39 million individuals received 1.3 billion hours of employer-sponsored formal and informal training at a cost of over \$200 billion or 1 to 2 percent of payroll costs. This amount is more than the gross national product of many nations and is more than all expenditures per year for education in the U.S.—primary grades through college.

FORMING PARTNERSHIPS

Organizations in the U.S. are striving to regain the position that they held formerly in the world market. They are doing this by developing new ways of thinking and new management systems and by educating, training, or retraining their employees.

In addition to providing in-house training, organizations are going outside their own business environments to establish partnerships with other businesses, governmental agencies, and educational institutions. As they recognize that they and the schools systems cannot train all employees adequately, they are looking for greater resources and expertise elsewhere.

In 1990, the national headquarters of the American Automobile Association (AAA) demonstrated the value of such a partnership by entering into a joint venture with the State of Florida. AAA experienced massive change when the national headquarters relocated with several hundred employees from Virginia to Florida, moved its Florida district office from Miami, hired over three hundred new employees, and changed from a typewriter-driven to a computerized environment.

As part of the relocation program, AAA and the State of Florida formed a training partnership in which the state, through Seminole Community College, provided a \$150,000 matching-fund, economic-development grant. This grant helped provide thousands of hours of training in the form of new-employee orientation and management, supervisory, and technical training. The result was a continuance of excellent customer service at the same time that AAA upgraded job skills and provided education in its corporate values and philosophy.

SHAPING NEW ROLES

In future U.S. organizations, managers and human resource development (HRD) professionals will be responsible for eliciting their employees' full potential. The latter group will have to function in a number of roles to attain organizational goals. These roles will vary, depending on immediate need, but will primarily revolve around the managers' ability to recruit, hire, train, coach, counsel, and evaluate employees. HRD professionals will have to prepare managers by creating valid business-needs assessments. They will also have to design or procure and then deliver training programs to teach managers the required skills. Additionally, training will be needed to reinforce previous learnings; to teach supervisors and managers to understand and value diversity and change; to introduce new policies, procedures, and technologies; and to assist managers in their own professional growth.

Bridges (1980) suggests dividing training into three categories:

- Seminars for top management in leading an organization through change,
- Workshops and individual coaching for middle managers and supervisors in managing people in transition, and
- Workshops in making change work for individuals who are most at risk because of changes.

“By taking a top-down approach,” Bridges concludes, “a better likelihood of success exists.”

For HRD personnel to be effective in the future, they must understand their roles and those of managers as leaders in reshaping their organizations. They also must be able to envision trends; formulate strategies to address the needs of their organizations, employees, and customers; and become advocates of change or act as change agents to carry out the changes. As London (1988) puts it, “To be effective, human resource professionals need to understand change from the perspectives of the leaders and managers they support as well as from their own perspective.”

THE NEW ORGANIZATION

The changes taking place in business have forced organizations to reevaluate and modify their human resource systems and the ways in which employees are managed. More than ever, organizations need to apply sound management practices to help attract, guide, motivate, educate, and retain talented employees.

Organizations must develop strategies to address many issues. All members of an organization will have to understand that the philosophy of “business as usual” does not work in a frequently changing environment. Organizations must examine demographic changes, such as a more diverse work force, while managers and human resource personnel must actively involve the diverse groups in finding valid solutions to their issues. Managers and HRD professionals must work together to facilitate change and, at the same time, to reduce the resulting anxiety for employees and the organization. To compensate for the shrinking middle-management force and to aid employees who are caught up in change, employers will have to offer opportunities for employees to maximize their individual potential through employee empowerment and education.

Organizational change is pervasive and ongoing. To capitalize on change, organizational leaders and HRD professionals need to be more proactive. If changes are planned and implemented effectively, and if they are supported by appropriate training, the results may be measured in terms of greater productivity, higher morale, increased quality, and reduced costs.

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■ APPLYING BUSINESS PROCESS IMPROVEMENT TO A TRAINING DEPARTMENT

Beverly Ann Scott

Abstract: Business process management and improvement concepts were applied to the development of a business-unit training department to be integrated into a corporate-wide organization and management development functions. A corporate program in business process improvement was developed on the basis of the department's effort to align values, strategies, and organizational needs.

Core activities of the training department were identified, and a model of core processes was developed. Process "owners" and project leaders play key roles. Continual review of the processes facilitates continual learning and improvement.

Business process improvement (also called business process reengineering) is the "hot" intervention in organizations today. One of the reasons is that, if done properly and thoroughly, it works. In order to obtain the desired results, organizations must understand and integrate certain basic concepts. These are as follows:

Employees are empowered to respond to customer needs. This concept emphasizes the value of employees who are able to respond promptly to customer requests without going upward in the hierarchy to obtain information, approval, or authority. Staff members should be trained and empowered to respond to clients in the most appropriate manner and to utilize the resources of other staff members as needed.

Flatter, more efficient organizations are created. Employees empowered with the information, skills, and authority to plan and monitor their own work and address customer needs need fewer supervisors and managers to watch over them, organize and direct their tasks, or intercede with customers.

Organizations are customer driven. Decisions and actions need to be evaluated in terms of the needs and requirements of customers.

There is a focus on process. A process is a series of activities; there is a specific input, something is done to it to add value to it, and the result is an output to an internal or external customer. Almost any activities in business can be defined in terms of processes. For example, core processes in a training department include consultation, design of programs, and delivery of programs.

People own their processes. Owning a process contrasts with managing a function, which tends to create boundaries without concern about how activities flow

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and integrate to meet customer requirements. Owning a process involves a new set of responsibilities: understanding the customer's requirements, paying attention to the flow of activities and how well one activity is integrated with the next, monitoring quality and efficiency, and working to continually improve the process.

People work in cross-functional teams. Team members who share expertise and resources across functions ensure integrated activities. All members are accountable for outcomes that meet customer requirements.

There is an emphasis on business process improvement. This may refer to improvement in parts of processes or to total process redesign, which may involve radical change.

A CASE STUDY

In the process of integrating a new training department into an existing, for corporate-wide organizational and management development function, we decided to use the concepts of business process improvement. The rationale was that if we applied these concepts within the department, we could better communicate them to and implement them in the larger organization.

Core Goals and Values

One of our core goals was to create a learning organization in which open communication and training would facilitate continual improvement and skilled, empowered, customer-focused employees and teams. We based our goals on the following set of values:

- Trust and respect for one another and for our customers.
- Care to balance the needs of individuals, relationships, and the organization as a whole.
- Continuation of our own growth and development in order to be able to provide the resources and solutions needed by our customers.
- Valuing of our differences and sharing of ideas and resources in order to collaboratively produce better products and services for our customers, both individually and in teams.
- The provision of competent, consistent, high-quality work.
- The maintenance of confidentiality.
- Empowerment of team members to meet mutually agreed on goals and responsibilities.

Strategy

We developed a strategy to achieve our goals, based on the following tactics:

- Integrate training and development into the company's overall business strategy.
- Consult with corporate management and business-unit management about organizational redesign, restructuring, and realignment.
- Design, create, and deliver learning and development opportunities that support business strategies (e.g., alternative delivery technologies and customized training modules).
- Transfer the skills of consultation, facilitation, and training by providing training of trainers, coaching, and shadow consulting.
- Integrate skill development into larger organization development efforts.
- Continue to improve programs and processes with current technology and trends.
- Define processes and standards that ensure quality.

Application

Although the department's goals, values, and strategy, and the concepts of business process improvement were the bases for applying process improvement to our department, we also developed an organizational rationale for our recommendations:

- To utilize resources more effectively and efficiently to meet organizational needs.
- To provide a consistent management of quality and responsiveness to customer needs.
- To provide opportunities for development and to provide daily coaching of all levels of staff.
- To develop integrated and coordinated approaches to both individual and organizational learning.

We developed a model of our core processes (Figure 1). The input of customer needs and business strategy feeds the core processes of design, training delivery, organization development, and management development. In the center, strategy and concept development integrate these processes. Surrounding all these are support and client and project management. The output is individual and organizational learning. Figure 2 lists the activities included in each process.

Next, we defined process owners and project leaders, diagrammed the structures (see Figure 3), and described accountability.

A process owner is responsible for:

- Ensuring efficiency, quality, and customer responsiveness;
- Developing and coaching other staff members whose time is allocated to that process; and

- Coordinating and integrating with other processes.

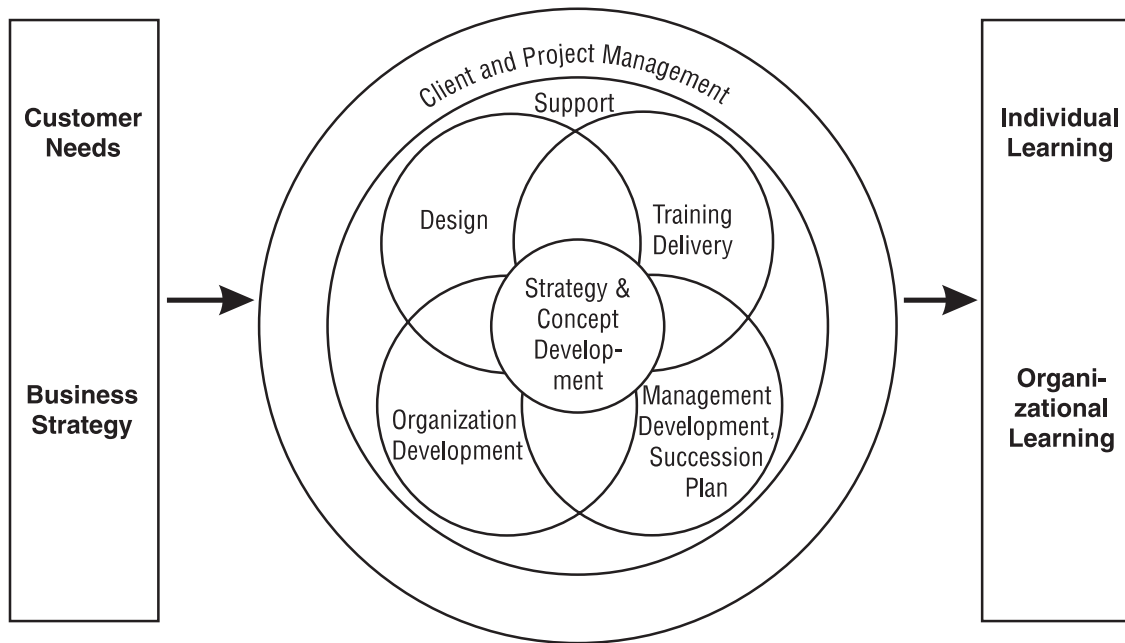


Figure 1. Model Training Department Processes

Design

- Needs analysis and diagnosis;
- Classroom, self-study, multimedia, and just-in-time (JIT) training;
- Format for delivery;
- Technical, skills, sales, supervisory, and management training;
- Evaluation.

Training Delivery

- Employee, sales, supervisory, and management training;
- Coaching and training trainers from line management and HR;
- Coaching and development of HR staff training skills;
- Optional delivery systems;
- Evaluation.

Organization Development

- Needs analysis and diagnosis;

Figure 2. Activities in Training Department Processes

- Line and HR management consultation on organizational change;
- Facilitation of business process improvement, problem solving, planning teams, and task forces;
- Team development;
- Survey-feedback development;
- Evaluation.

Management Development and Succession Planning

- Succession-planning process;
- High potential/executive development;
- Development planning;
- Consulting and coaching managers on subordinate and own development;
- Assessment processes and tools;
- Identification of external resources for development;
- Coordination of library resources;
- Educational assistance.

Strategy and Concept Development

- Strategy formation to support business strategy;
- Integration of models and concepts across processes and programs;
- Development of models to meet client needs;
- Application of new technology, methodology and models.

Support

- Logistics coordination;
- Production;
- Publishing;
- Clerical and administrative support.

Client and Project Management

- Planning, coordination, and implementation.
- Project management;
- Customer interface.

Figure 2 (continued). Activities in Training Department Processes

Training Department Management

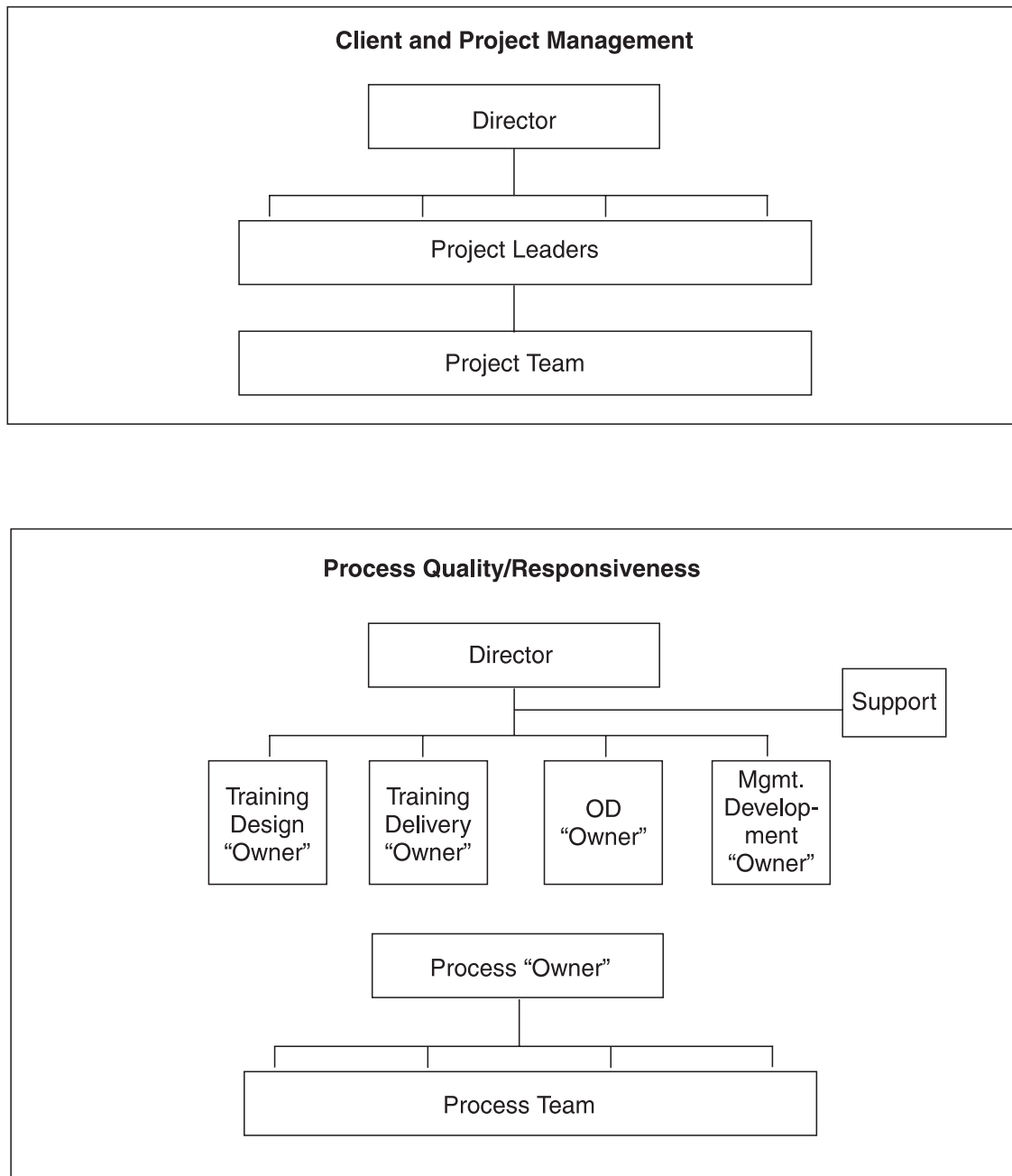


Figure 3. Training Department Structures

A project leader is assigned to coordinate and manage a project and is responsible for:

- Managing a project team composed of members from appropriate processes (e.g., design, delivery, consultation);

- Customer interface and satisfaction; and
- Meeting project deliverables and outcomes.

Implementation

As we created our new department, we found continuous learning and continuous improvement to be key guiding principles. For example, the design-process owner has developed tools and processes to increase the quality and efficiency of the design process. We have created an improvement team to review our evaluation processes and to recommend improvements and higher level evaluation. As we have learned more about our processes, we have designed the flow of our macroprocesses with more detail, as is shown in Figure 4.

Finally, we continue to examine our goals and our vision of our future. The use of business-process improvement concepts continues to be a useful and practical approach to our work.

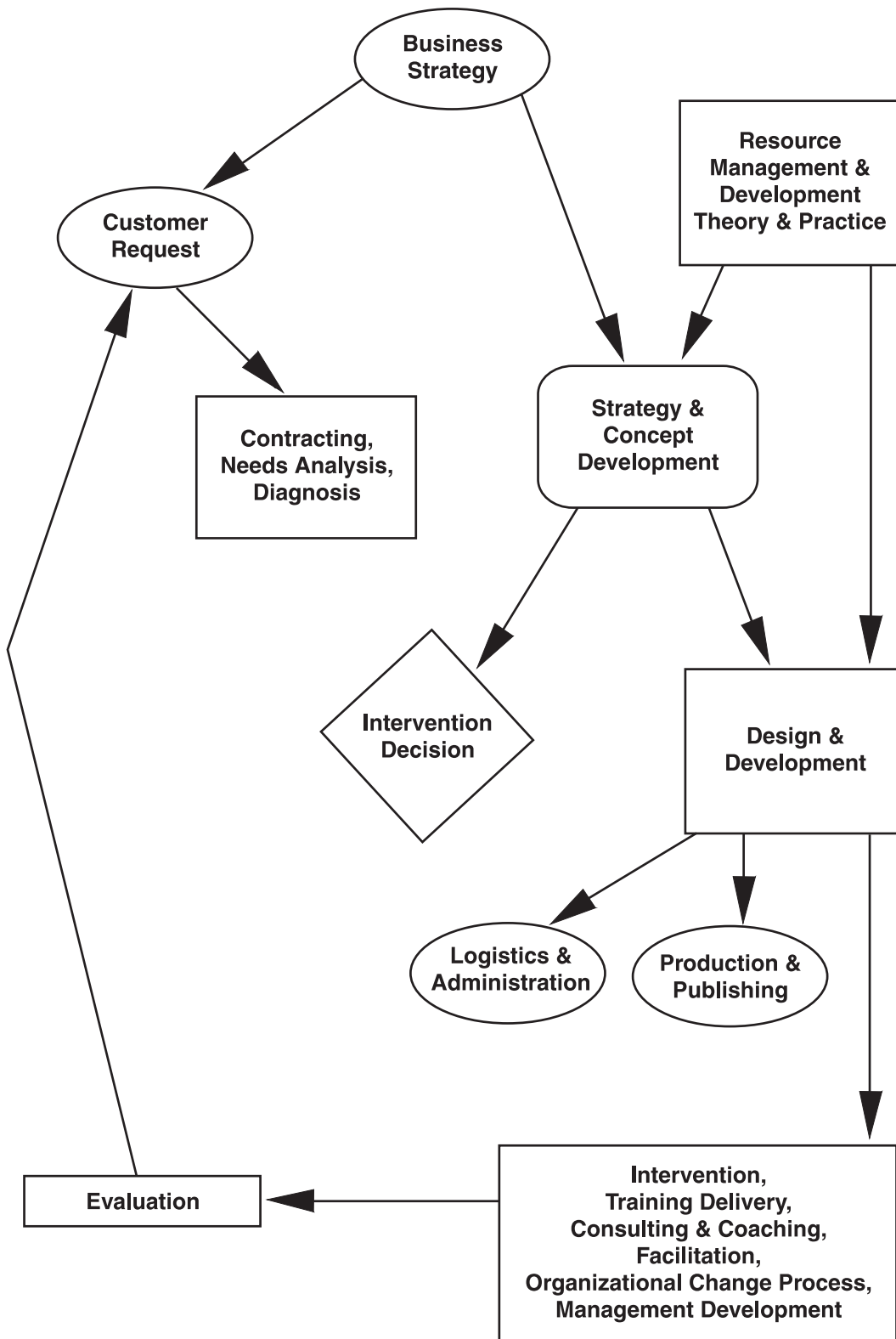


Figure 4. Flow of Training Department Macroprocesses

■ UNDERSTANDING CHANGE FROM THE GESTALT PERSPECTIVE

Hank Karp

Abstract: Change is inevitable, and it is inherently neither good nor bad. People can handle change in one of three ways: (1) the “traditional” approach (desiring no change), (2) the “dynamic” approach (desiring constant change), or (3) the “pragmatic” approach (desiring productive change).

Productive change requires two phases: presenting the change and working with the resistance. The change leader must work with both phases and provide a process that will facilitate a specific change easily and effectively with minimum disruption and maximum support from the group. The four basic styles of change leadership (autocratic, participative, supportive, and laissez-faire) each have appropriate applications, depending on the particular circumstances. However, the change leader’s most important function is to help people to understand that they have the skills needed to implement positive change and that they are already using these skills effectively in their personal and professional lives.

Most people perceive change as disruptive and to be avoided whenever possible. The paradox is that the only thing that is constant and that we can depend on is that change will occur. In fact, adapting to change is something that we all do all the time. We may not even notice it unless attention is called to it.

In thinking about change, we need to recognize that change is neither good nor bad, it just is. The key is to recognize that change is neutral, that it occurs, and that it is perceived as good or bad depending on the conditions.

THE CHANGE CONTINUUM

One way to envision change is as a continuum. All human characteristics and capacities are polarities, e.g., good-bad, strong-weak, tall-short, and so forth. The capacity for change also can be viewed as a polarity. On the far left of the continuum is “no change” (e.g., life in a Trappist monastery); on the far right of the continuum is “constant change” (e.g., an Army recruit’s first two weeks in basic training).

The Traditional Approach

In the illustration, the left polarity describes the condition of no change. This typically is described as a “traditional” approach. A person who wants no change is focused on the past, probably conservative in terms of values, and perceives almost any change as a threat to the established order. The position is that if something is new,

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it is bad. Traditionalists who are key policy makers and people of influence tend to be in their mid-fifties and early sixties. At dinner, they compare the meal to the best one they had ever had. Although the traditionalist position does provide stability, comfort, and minimum threat, it also carries the seeds of boredom, lack of opportunity, no growth, and increasing levels of individual and interpersonal stagnation.

No Change	Productive Change	Constant Change
Traditional Past Change is Bad Values What Was Older Resists Change Stagnation	Pragmatic Present Change Is Inevitable Values What Is Wide Range Honors Resistance Growth and Effectiveness	Dynamic Future Change Is Good Values What Might Be Younger Suppresses Resistance Chaos

Figure 1. The Change Continuum

The Dynamic Approach

The right polarity describes the condition of “constant change.” This can be referred to as a “dynamic” approach. This position is focused on the future. The position is that if something is new, it is good. Any change is seen as positive, and any resistance to change is seen as behind the times. People who hold the dynamic view who are key decision makers and people of influence tend to be in their thirties or early forties. At dinner, they think about what they are going to have for breakfast. Although the dynamic position does provide energy, excitement, and activity, it also produces a great deal of motion without meaning, mindless jargon, the tendency toward surface treatments, and a growing inability to focus on what is really important. The move is toward chaos.

In their rush to leave the traditional ways behind, many of today’s organizations have charged into a set of dynamic organizational norms and values and are not much better off for having made the switch.

The Pragmatic Approach

The third position, in the center of the continuum, is the condition of “productive change,” which can be described as the “pragmatic” approach. This position is focused on what is happening now and is characterized by flexibility. Change is perceived as inevitable; however, how one responds to it is a matter of conscious

choice, even when the choice is for the status quo. Pragmatic policy makers and people of influence tend to span the age range. At dinner, they enjoy the meal.

There is a paradox in productive change: one changes by not changing. That is, when one focuses on what is happening right now, the increased awareness resulting from that focus is a change. How one chooses to respond to the new condition is a matter of conscious choice. It is best determined by considering what is wanted and what is available and then considering the current conditions that are supporting and/or blocking the change. The move is toward growth and effectiveness. It is this position that results in the smoothest transition from one state to the next.

TWO ASPECTS OF THE CHANGE PROCESS

Initiating change is a two-phase process. Phase one is “Presenting the Change,” and phase two is “Working with the Resistance” that accompanies almost every change. Most people do a good job in phase one and then stop, not even realizing that phase two exists and that the job is only half done.

In the change continuum, each of the three positions has its own unique response to resistance, just as it has to change. The “No Change” position tends to resist change without thinking because it perceives change as being bad. The “Constant Change” position tends to suppress resistance because it sees change as being inherently good simply because it is. The “Productive Change” position honors resistance because it accepts it as something to be worked with, a natural part of the change process.

EIGHT ASSUMPTIONS

The Productive Change process relies on the following eight assumptions:

1. Change is best facilitated by developing ownership in the change process.
2. Change will occur most easily in an atmosphere of enlightened self-interest.
3. People do not resist change; they resist pain or the threat of it.
4. People tend to resist the opposite of change, which is boredom.
5. Power is the ability to get what you want; resistance is the ability to avoid what you do not want. Resistance is a subset of power, not of change.
6. Resistance is best dealt with by honoring it, rather than suppressing, avoiding, or minimizing it.
7. People can best work with resistance from others by first understanding and accepting their own.
8. Change leadership involves helping people to make better choices in light of current realities and then assisting them in taking full responsibility for making these choices happen.

THE CHANGE LEADER

In working with change, the leader is the person who wants the change to happen and is in a position to work with the group to make it happen.

The role of the change leader is to provide a process that will facilitate a specific change easily and effectively with minimum disruption and maximum support from the group.

The change leader is usually—but not always—the manager or supervisor of the group that has to deal with the change. A group member can initiate and implement a change (e.g., an idea for changing a specific work procedure), as can a quality-improvement team or a human resources representative, just to name a few.

FOUR BASIC STYLES OF CHANGE LEADERSHIP

Despite common myths, there is no one best style of change leadership. Many “experts” advocate a participative or democratic leadership style. This style may be the most effective approach in a majority of cases, but it is by no means the only appropriate style for effectively managing change.

Leadership can be defined as the ability to obtain willing compliance in accomplishing something. In other words, the more you can facilitate a person’s performing a task without resenting having to do it or resenting you for having assigned it, the better the leader you are in that situation. Obviously, at some times it is easier to be a good leader than at other times.

As we all know, situations, conditions, and people are constantly changing. To manage change successfully, one must stay flexible and able to respond to what is going on. The more the change is described as what is presently happening—rather than as what should be happening or what might happen next—the easier it will be to work with people in facilitating the change.

Every change leader has a unique style. Each person’s style is made up of some combination of the four prototype styles: autocratic, participative, supportive, and laissez faire. The styles of change leadership are intended to manage change; they are compatible with, but somewhat different from, the standard leadership styles for managing work. What works best for one person is probably that person’s primary style, but each change leader should learn to use the other three styles as backup styles (i.e., to be versatile) because different circumstances may call for different styles.

Autocratic

The autocratic change leader makes the demand and the group is expected to respond.

Best When: The demand is simple and there is little or no interest on the part of the group *or* when the demand is externally imposed and not negotiable.

Application: Autocracy is an effective approach to managing change when the change is not important to anyone. Autocracy saves time and reduces resistance to the change, because at least under these circumstances, people are not having their time wasted. *Example:* Determining what the new color will be in all the rest rooms in the building.

Autocracy is also the appropriate style to use when the change is externally imposed and there is no opportunity for negotiation. Implying that there is some choice in a change that is already decided on will do nothing but increase employees' frustration with that change. It is better to state what the change will be and then let the employees simply state any dissatisfaction with it, in order to get it out of their systems. *Example:* Enforcing a new policy of "no facial hair" because of possible interference with safety masks.

Participative

The participative change leader is involved with the change and negotiates the change with the group.

Best When: The group's input is needed to maximize the change outcome and/or heavy resistance is anticipated.

Application: The participative style of change leadership is used most frequently because it maximizes both individual input and ownership in the final implementation. Under this style, the change leader and the group work together to make the change happen. It is the style to consider first if there are any negotiable elements in the change and/or there is a high need for input from the group members. *Example:* An employee-involvement team is formed to investigate and recommend an expensive piece of equipment.

The participative approach is also very effective when there is a large amount of resistance to the change. A participative change leader who is skilled in working with resistance can maintain control of the group process; he or she also can facilitate the group's finding ways to work with the elements that are blocking its acceptance of the change. *Example:* A new policy concerning overtime has been mandated, but each department has some choice in how it is to be implemented.

Supportive

The supportive change leader assists the group in developing a process so that it can deal with the change.

Best When: The group is competent to create and/or implement a change but needs the change leader's support in either running its meeting or getting outside assistance.

Application: The supportive style is most appropriate when (1) the group members are highly competent to implement the change, (2) there is high interest

and relatively low resistance, and (3) working relationships and trust among the group members are low. The change leader focuses on how the group is working and makes sure that everyone has a chance to speak, that conflict issues are handled reasonably, and that the atmosphere is a relatively safe one in which to work. The change leader does not become involved in making the change happen. *Example:* The work group is relatively new, and the members do not know one another well enough to have developed good communication patterns or a high level of trust.

A second application of the supportive style is when the group requires outside support to make the change happen, and the change leader knows how to get it. *Example:* A department is converting to a new software application, and access to company training resources is needed to facilitate installation of the new program.

Laissez Faire

The laissez faire change leader describes the change to be created and/or implemented and then disengages from the group.

Best When: The group is highly competent to respond, and there is little or no resistance to the change. The change leader may have little specific task expertise in comparison with the group.

Application: The hands-off approach to managing change is very effective when the group members are highly task competent and creative, when they have the interpersonal skills to work well together, and when the change is meeting little opposition. In such a case, the change leader presents the change—or the need for change—answers questions, sets boundaries, and then leaves the group to its own devices. *Example:* An effective research and development team is asked to respond quickly to a customer's unavoidable change in job specifications.

CONCLUSION

Change should be thought of as a normal part of organizational life, rather than as a special situation that requires concern. The change leader's most important function is helping people to understand that they have the skills needed to implement positive change and are already using them effectively in their lives, both at work and at home.

■ REIGNITING SPIRIT IN THE WORK PLACE

Laura Hauser

Abstract: Reengineering and downsizing—the change initiatives of the 1990s—have caused a serious dip in employee morale, which, in turn, has decreased productivity. Yet the pace at which business changes will only accelerate in the future, and organizations must be able to implement change initiatives without undermining morale even further.

The author suggests that executives, managers, and other change agents must integrate both the tangible and intangible dimensions of business. How? By speaking not only to people's heads but also to their hearts, and by aligning structures, systems, and technology in a way that promotes human potential. Hauser believes that by integrating the tangible and intangible dimensions of business, organizations can not only survive but can thrive in today's competitive business environment.

Reengineering and downsizing, the cost-cutting strategies of the 1990s, are taking fierce tolls on organizations. More and more, we are learning that downsizing depletes employee morale. Low morale, in turn, diminishes productivity, which causes the very monetary losses that management was trying to avoid by downsizing.

As a result of widespread staff reductions, the remaining employees often feel overwhelmed by their increased work loads and have had to lengthen their working hours to as many as ten to sixteen per day. Both managerial and nonmanagerial employees feel devalued and understandably discouraged; they no longer find their work satisfying and meaningful. People feel a loss of energy; they feel psychologically empty and distanced from their work and the organization.

The fast pace of change is only going to accelerate in the future, and organizations still have to be able to respond with changes of their own. So how can management effect change without disengaging and overextending employees in the process? At a recent conference for PIHRA, the Professionals in Human Resources Association, I presented what I believe is the answer: reigniting spirit in the work place. My thesis was that sparking organizational energy is an emerging critical success factor for leaders who are responsible for planning and implementing strategic-change initiatives.

When people are asked to implement change but their spirits are not engaged, they take whatever action is required of them, but they do not offer their loyalty, support, concern, and special efforts. Consequently, the change itself often fizzles and gives way to anxiety and frustration. And if the organization's own employees

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do not adapt to the new situation, how can the organization survive and thrive in a rapidly changing world?

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN SPIRIT AND THE BOTTOM LINE

An individual's "spirit" is the source of positive, creative energy—the center of his or her being. Spirit is an intangible but powerful aspect of individual and organizational success. When people's spirit is evoked, they feel energetic, attuned to their work, and committed to achieving desired business results.

Although many organizational leaders are proficient at dealing with the tangible dimension of success (how to focus on profits, how to implement new systems, structures, technologies, and processes), they either forget or do not know how to deal with the intangible dimensions of business (the human spirit). But a leadership that integrates the tangible and intangible dimensions into the planning and implementing of strategic change guides the organization toward dynamic business results (see Figure 1). Such a leadership understands that employee support and enthusiasm play an important role in achieving a positive bottom line.

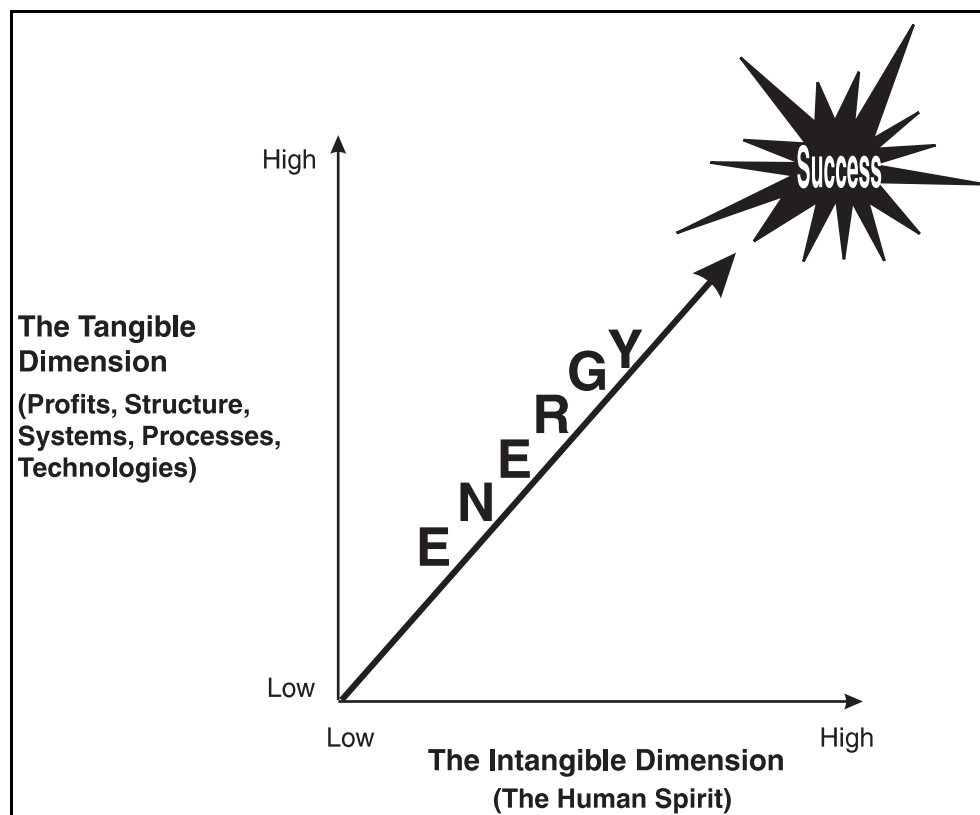


Figure 1. Integrating the Tangible and Intangible Dimensions of Success

Every employee needs to see meaning in a job in order to get that job done; the importance of purpose, values, and ethics in work cannot be overstated.

Consequently, a CEO who is able to speak sincerely, not only to heads but also to hearts, is in a position to access powerful energy and creativity. In addition, the organization's management must "walk the talk" by aligning structures and systems in a way that promotes human potential.

A CASE STUDY IN REIGNITING SPIRIT

The following case study illustrates how to reignite the spirit of an organization during a reengineering change initiative by integrating the tangible and intangible dimensions of success.

The Situation

The new president of the mortgage division of a major U.S. bank was under pressure from the corporate office to significantly improve financial results, increase market share, and enhance customer satisfaction. During his first year, the division was running behind its financial plan, the processing of residential loans was backlogged, and there was a high level of customer dissatisfaction. Most processes were manual; employees did not trust one another to do things right the first time, so they regularly double-checked one another's work.

The division embarked on reengineering, designing and implementing a new work-flow process and significantly changing the structure of the enterprise. Employees held the unrealistic expectation that a "reengineering switch" would be flipped and conditions would magically change overnight. When the magic did not happen, the employees were disillusioned.

The Intervention

The president realized that to turn the reengineering effort into a success, he would have to integrate the tangible dimension of producing positive bottom-line results with the intangible dimension of engaging the human spirit. I consulted with the president and his human resources manager about how to accomplish this integration. A key intervention used was the creation of two cross-functional teams. The first, the project team, was responsible for coordinating and overseeing the technical aspects of the new work-flow design. The second team, the transition team, served as a mirror and pulse-check of people's spirits as the changes were implemented.

The transition team's primary goal was to provide top management and the project team with honest feedback as the organizational changes were implemented, much as an anesthesiologist informs a surgeon of a patient's condition as an operation progresses. The members of the transition team followed this pattern of action:

- They identified critical human and operational issues that were impeding the reengineering effort;
- They made recommendations to the president and key executives about how to address these issues;
- They monitored the implementation of approved recommendations; and
- They scheduled similar meetings to follow up on the implementation of recommendations and to address any new issues.

“Just-in-Time” Problem Solving

The transition team’s meetings offer an excellent example of integrating nuts-and-bolts business issues with human concerns, engaging the spirits of the employees, and communicating with employees at a heart level as well as a head level.

In each case, I facilitated monthly meetings in which the team members met for half a day without top managers, identifying the successes and problems associated with reengineering thus far and creating solutions to recommend to top management. Then, in the afternoon, the president and key vice presidents joined the transition team.

A dialogue ensued. The members of the transition team and the executives openly and honestly talked about the positive responses as well as the pain and problems associated with the organizational changes. The executives listened to the team’s recommendations and engaged in “just-in-time” problem solving. As all of the organization’s key decision makers were present, decisions could be made on the spot.

Although approval of the team’s recommendations was not always automatic, the executives were careful to communicate their belief that the team members were presenting realistic solutions based on an understanding of the organization’s operational concerns. The team members were empowered in that they were able to have an impact on human issues; top management was able to convey its concern about human issues as well as ensure the stability of the reengineering effort.

With each subsequent meeting, the transition team followed up with the executives, asking for an update on the agreements made during the previous meeting before proceeding to new issues.

In addition to bestowing empowerment, conveying trust, and demonstrating top management’s concern for people’s feelings, these meetings reignited people’s spirits in other ways. For example, the meeting structure created a forum for interaction among people who ordinarily would not have interacted. For the first time in the division’s history, the “process owners” consistently sat together to understand how their departments interacted and how they could better help one another.

Also, the team members were able to see the big picture, which, in turn, initiated a process of effective, cross-functional communication. People’s language changed

from divisive and blaming terminology (“We are not the problem; they are the problem”) to inclusive and problem-solving terminology (“We’re all in this together; let’s figure out how to make things better”). Team members left the meetings with a sense of satisfaction, feeling that they had made an impact on managerial thinking, decision making, and the quality of work life for everyone. And they had.

Results

The division was expecting a 75-percent success rate in implementing the new workflow design. However, due to increased employee commitment, job satisfaction, and quick resolutions of problems, the division achieved an amazing 95-percent success rate.

Other benefits also were realized, as expressed in the president’s words:

Without the team interventions, I think we would have only been at 80 percent of our financial goal. But more important is the positive change in the satisfaction rating of our major customer base and our increase in market share. I am very, very satisfied with the turn. I think what we really learned is the power of the human spirit in the equation. The first half year, I was talking to people’s heads by emphasizing the numerical targets, but my message just wasn’t sinking in. I said to myself, “I have to switch—I have to talk to their hearts.”

CONCLUSION

The integration of the tangible and intangible dimensions of organizational success during times of strategic change is the key to positive results. Human resource managers are in a unique position to become the architects of this integration, building bridges between top management and employees as well as between the bottom line and the human spirit. The way to begin is by raising the question “How can we tap into individual and team spirit to unleash new energy to contribute to individual and organizational success?”

Using the bank division’s successful implementation of a reengineering effort, we can extrapolate the following guidelines for reigniting spirit and promoting success in a strategic change initiative:

1. Deal with the intangible dimension of change as seriously as the tangible dimension.
2. Speak not only to people’s heads but also to their hearts.
3. Involve employees in the design and execution of the change.
4. Allow for the emotions, intuitions, and qualities of relationships to enter the design and implementation process.
5. Align structures, technologies, and systems in a way that promotes human potential and engages people’s spirits.
6. Create an environment for organizational learning and for talking honestly about the pain and difficulties associated with organizational change.

7. Implement mechanisms for cross-functional communication and interaction and just-in-time problem solving.
8. Acknowledge and trust people's abilities to come up with realistic solutions to organizational problems related to the change initiative.
9. Maintain a constancy of purpose and sense of urgency.
10. Check continually on the emotional climate of the organization during the change period.

■ IMPLEMENTING ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE: SIX STEPS AND A CASE STUDY

Paul Jansen and Rendel de Jong

Abstract: True cultural changes in organizations, that is, changes in behavior, do not happen as a result of management edicts or mission statements. This article presents a six-step process for introducing a real change in organizations and presents a case study of changes at KPN and PTT Telecom in The Netherlands.

The steps are a formulation of shared values, behavioral concretization of the values, commitment to change, learning to manage interfaces, embedding the values in structures and systems, and making the behavior clearly visible and quantifiable. The general scheme of the project, phases in the implementation roadblocks, and successes are discussed.

As a result of research conducted in over 200 U.S. companies, Kotter and Heskett (1992) identified “culture” as the key variable in performance. They distinguish “superficial culture” (visible behavioral patterns or “how we do things here”) and “depth culture” (shared values and standards). Depth culture is difficult to change because it is omnipresent. Moreover, depth culture is maintained by being embedded in superficial cultural systems and procedures.

Many of the cultural edicts made by top managers prove to be very superficial when one examines who gets promoted in their organizations. For example, many companies encourage behavior A (e.g., empowerment, taking risks, responding to the customer) but, in fact, reward behavior B (e.g., conformity, rigid management, responding to internal needs first).

A revised reward system can be a strong anchor for a new organizational structure. In their treatise on internal entrepreneurship, Kuratko, Hornsby, Naffziger, and Montagno (1993) conclude that “employees are willing to work on new projects and challenging teams if the rewards are apparent.” They add that steps in this direction do not need to be confined to simple pay rises. “It should be mentioned that the exact rewards for corporate entrepreneuring are not yet agreed upon by most researchers.”

CULTURAL CHANGE IN ORGANIZATIONS

Cultural changes appear to come from above. They stand or fall with power, in the sense that somebody has to start “pushing,” albeit subtly. According to Beer, Eisenstat, and Spector (1992), local behavior will not change automatically because the head office announces change programs, training courses, quality programs, and

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so on; only the formal organization changes. A different stacking of the building blocks of the organization is no guarantee that the behavioral patterns of the employees in those blocks will change. On the contrary, keeping the old working methods in place perpetuates the old organization. It is wrong to assume that the formal organization (structure) and the informal organization (work and behavior) are separate systems.

Beer et al. (1992) discovered during a four-year study in six large companies that real change takes place in a way “demarcated by situations.” The managers of local business units concentrated on “real work” rather than “abstractions such as ‘participation’ or ‘culture.’”

Changing means learning, and the only way this can occur meaningfully is in concrete situations. Change does not result from general attitudes or knowledge but from the way people behave at work. Because behavior depends on where a person is embedded in the organization (i.e., his or her role), any attempt to change behavior must start by placing the person in a new organizational setting, creating a new environment with different requirements, or assigning a new collection of competencies conducive to effective operation.

A SIX-STEP PLAN FOR CHANGING ORGANIZATIONS

The following is a six-step plan for changing organizations proposed by Beer et al. (1992):

1. Mobilize involvement in the process of change by means of a joint (workers and management) diagnosis of the issues facing the organization. Let people explain what they think is wrong and what needs to be done.
2. Develop a joint vision of organizational and managerial requirements that will lead to a strong competitive position. This diagnosis is, in effect, task-oriented medication.
3. Ensure that there is consensus on the new vision; make sure its implementation is understood by all; and ensure that there is cohesion so as to guarantee continuity. This requires three things:
 - Strong leadership from local management,
 - Sufficient support from training programs and other areas, and
 - The resolve to replace people who cannot or will not change, after they have been given an opportunity to prove themselves.
4. Expand the change to all departments without exerting pressure from above. Allow each department to “reinvent the wheel” if necessary.
5. Institutionalize the change in the form of formal policies, systems, and structures.
6. Evaluate strategies and adjust them to solve problems in the change process.

Schein (1993) arrived at a similar approach, from a strong orientation to the psychology of the individual. In simple terms, he proposes that fear of change should be overcome “paradoxically” by creating an even greater fear. The key word is “destabilization.” Schein contends that information entirely out of keeping with the existing working methods should be imparted boldly and credibly. Moreover, he believes that a direct relationship should be forged between what the environment (usually customers) wants and everyday working behaviors. Misfittings should be pointed out. Everyone must take responsibility. If the primary fear of changing makes way for a greater concern (created on genuine grounds) about how things are done now, the result will be a fear of not changing, thus, the laying of foundations for change. The third step is the cultivation of a sense of security by sketching solutions in practical terms, by outlining ways in which people might alter their behavior and giving them a chance to practice. This shows employees that the road to a different organizational culture is not littered with obstacles.

Based on the step-plan presented by Beer et al. (1992), and on similar schemes proposed by other authors (e.g., see the voluminous work by Glaser, Abelson, and Garrison [1983]), the present authors have designed the following general six-step plan for the change of work behavior and the introduction of a learning organization. This is summarized as follows:

1. Demonstrate clearly what effective behavior is (show clearly what the objectives are and how they can be achieved). Also describe the benefits of achieving goals (what does the employee get out of it?). Reinforce with behavior by senior management in accordance with the new culture.
2. On a behavioral level, constantly confront the ineffectiveness of methods being used (it does not work that way anymore). It is essential to have reliable information. Keep policies simple, but devote a lot of attention to the actual work (instead of complex policies and a simplistic approach to work).
3. Give people the opportunity to decide whether they want to change their behaviors. Commitment is the key, wanting to change the way one works. People can no longer avoid making the choice. They will automatically feel the repercussions if they persist in working inefficiently. The aim is to have people enjoy working in a different way.
4. Provide necessary assistance, coaching, and feedback. Knowledge and ability must be organized properly. Ensure that signals from colleagues and managers are consistent, which means establishing a strong social construction.
5. Obstacles to doing things differently must be removed; the budget must allow for this and for training and rewards. Make people aware of adverse circumstances. Manage cultural changes.
6. Maintain a consistent focus on evidence of desired behavior by means of assessments and rewards (not just money). To enable this, make behavior

clearly visible and quantifiable. Make sure that people do not start feeling cynical about the changes.

THE CASE OF KPN AND TELECOM: INTRODUCING PERSPECTIVE

The Postal and Telecommunications Services of The Netherlands was privatized in 1989, becoming the Koninklijke PTT Nederland NV (KPN). KPN is the largest private-sector employer in the Netherlands, with a work force of around 100,000. In order to be the best provider of information transport, KPN had to change its internal working methods and adopt an entrepreneurial approach.

PTT Telecom is one of the major operating companies of KPN. It employs around 30,000 people who work in several business units, including National Networks, Business Communications, Residential Market, and International Telecommunications. A number of corporate-policy and corporate-service units operate from the head office. The business units bear responsibility for business areas. A business area is composed of a business unit, which directs operations at the central level, and those parts of the thirteen Telecom districts that are concerned with the specific field covered by the business area. A business unit may set regulations and control activities. Through a system of “integration management,” the districts are ultimately the people who carry out the company’s mission and pursue its objectives at operational levels.

PTT Telecom decided to invest in total quality management and to simplify and inject uniformity into its business processes in order to be ready for growing international competition and a rapidly changing marketplace. “Perspective” was the name given to a major reorganization program that began in 1990 and will affect virtually all the company's employees. Table 1 provides an indication of the direction in which the company is moving with Perspective.

The president of PTT Telecom visited all departments of the company to sell the program to the employees and to assure them that Perspective would be implemented without any loss of jobs. As a change agent, the intermediary staff—the “management of change”—was established at headquarters to cooperate closely with managers in creating customer-driven employees, formulas, and organizations.

Essentially, the general aim of Perspective is to reengineer work in such a way that it is no longer cut into separate bits. By means of Perspective, Telecom management intends to simplify the organization and to make Telecom more transparent, both for customers and for employees. When work is reorganized in business processes that are oriented toward customers, management becomes equivalent to process management, to management of the employee who manages the process. The manager coaches employees to help them serve the customers in optimal ways.

Table 1. Major Cultural Changes Within PTT Telecom

From	To
public sector	private sector
monopoly	competition
production	service
subscriber	customer
technical by nature	customer satisfaction
costs	profit
rules/procedures	results
powers	responsibilities
functional control	integral control of operations
knowing	doing
giant tanker	fleet of maneuverable ships
security	risks
managing	entrepreneuring

In order to give the company a face that was immediately recognizable by customers, it was decided to set up thirty-two Telecom regions with far-reaching competencies. This approach allowed an alert and effective response to customers' requirements. Each region has a work force of 200 to 300 and is responsible for 200,000 to 300,000 customers in its own area. Each region is responsible for all activities performed for a customer according to the principle of one-stop-shopping. It deals with everything from consulting to sales, from installation to service, and from invoicing to collection. The advantage is that customers perceive that one part of the Telecom organization is handling all their business in a simple and clear fashion. The new approach also has made things simpler and clearer for employees.

The other parts of PTT Telecom's internal organization (the business units and head office) are going to be reorganized to create shorter lines of communication with the operational branches (the regions), with recognizable structures and tools for getting goods, services, and systems to customers in the marketplace. As a consequence, almost 24,000 members of the work force of 31,000 will be affected by the reorganization into Telecom regions (8,000 employees), customized project units (1,800 employees), and engineering and maintenance (14,000 employees).

All positions in the first and second management layers of all these new or revamped organizations are being filled through the internal advertising of vacancies throughout KPN nationwide. An innovation is that employees in grades that make them eligible for an advertised management position are expected to submit an application, which may be turned down. It is not easy to manage and solve the social

problems that arise out of this approach. A separate follow-up program has been established to devote attention to this matter. By the time Perspective is completed, more than 500 management positions will have new incumbents.

Making Perspective Happen

In PTT Telecom, it had been observed that many new organizational missions tended to become bogged down in mere rhetoric. Consequently, they have no effect on the culture, basic values, and standards of the organization. It appeared that modifying organizational structures was no guarantee of a transformation in actual work behavior. Several reasons were identified for work behaviors lagging behind transformational messages. Each of these correlates directly to one of the steps in changing work behavior from the six-step plan presented here.

1. Lack of clarity about the new behavior, e.g., what is meant by “intrapreneurship” or “taking the initiative” or “having a commercial attitude?”
2. Lack of feelings of necessity; conditions are not experienced as serious or alarming.
3. Lack of commitment to the new behavior.
4. Lack of knowledge and ability.
5. External obstacles frustrate employees in their efforts to demonstrate new behaviors.
6. Old, traditional work behaviors are still being reinforced (for instance, by the organization’s promotion or salary systems).

In accordance with this, it was concluded that a change of work behavior would come about only when it had been made abundantly clear that the way things had been done in the past was no longer effective. In accordance with the second step, people had to be confronted with this sobering fact. It was necessary to show people why changes were essential, using hard facts rather than theories. This made it necessary to outline alternatives, to formulate new ways of doing things. It was imperative to describe the new culture in terms of a set of commonly agreed on and recognized Telecom shared values. In accordance with step 1 of Glaser et al. (1983), a concrete behavioral depiction of these work norms was mandatory. In addition, feedback had to be given on the new values (step 6). Thus, learning and experimenting with a new way of doing things had to be supported (step 4). Finally, the new behaviors had to be embedded in structures, with contractually agreed arrangements, bonuses and targets, performance appraisals, a system of management development, and so on (step 5).

Step 1. Formulation of Telecom Shared Values

The KPN management style was set down in a manual—a yardstick for a new, results-oriented performance-appraisal system. The manual was circulated among all managers (over 7,000) at KPN and was discussed with them at great length in “management-to-management talks.” The emphasis was on the way the general principles of the management style needed to be expressed in everyday management (e.g., in appraising the performance of employees).

KPN’s general management principles were compressed into seven shared values for PTT Telecom, and these have become the *modus operandi* for managers and employees alike. These PTT Telecom values and standards (see Figure 1) were formulated after lengthy discussions within PTT Telecom. The president of PTT Telecom led the rally in a way that made the values explicit and showed everybody what needed to be done. The values and standards consist of a mixture of “controlled management” (completion of high-quality work on time, according to the customer’s needs, and cost consciously) and “strategic entrepreneurship” (exhibiting enthusiasm, commitment, and audacity with a sharp eye for the market).

1. Thinking and Acting T-Wide
Breaking through limitations; adopting various approaches; having vision, a broad outlook, and market consciousness; cohesion; creating added value; not placing people and things in boxes
2. Commitment
Doing what you say and saying what you do; avoiding ambiguous messages; showing pride in the organization; not exhibiting cynicism; having feelings of ownership; working for consensus; team work; loyalty in word and in deed; taking responsibility; getting involved
3. Belief in Action
Focusing on results; expecting and appreciating hard work; displaying initiative; having a sense of purpose and drive; being decisive; being active mentally and physically; taking a gutsy approach
4. Goal-Directed and Consistent Management
Giving clear guidance; making roles/tasks distinct; clarifying responsibilities; motivating by setting goals; managing people instead of projects; pointing out and celebrating successes; being systematic; creating incentives
5. Openness and Honesty
Having an open attitude; being available; being willing to participate; talking less and listening more; showing respect for and interest in people’s advice; sharing credit; encouraging ideas; accepting mistakes
6. Practical Management
Maintaining close involvement in day-to-day activities; being clearly present; having a direct approach toward getting things done; being noticeable; coping with matters immediately and working them through; being “hands on”

Figure 1. The Shared Values of PTT Telecom

At the root of the values and standards is the realization that the Telecom intrapreneurs must combine management and successful entrepreneuring in the best possible way. Management is a question of doing things properly, i.e., on time, tailored to needs, alert to what the customer wants, and efficiently/effectively. To some extent, this can be achieved by rearranging work processes, e.g., by standardizing business formulas. This standardization touches on the company's desire to present a single "face" to the customer.

Step 2. Making the Values Behaviorally Concrete

To make the values more concrete and to confront the existing work force with concrete behavioral guidelines, it was decided to interview people at several layers of Telecom (top-level managers, general managers of Telecom regions, and mechanics) about the relationships between their work and the Telecom values. Summarized with respect to the values deemed most critical, the findings were as follows:

Thinking and Acting Telecom-Wide was considered the most important value. It requires a helicopter view: being able to ascend and descend, as a general overview of the organization and its environment is not obtained by desk research but by setting out to explore. It was stressed that employees are responsible for acquiring this broad outlook. It implies that one has to get used to variations in levels of abstraction in work: thinking and doing, "flying in the sky," and "drudging in the mud" are parts of the same job. This means that this shared value is not to be isolated from practical management.

Commitment at Telecom was assessed as low at the time of the interviews. Although people seemed to work hard and do as they were told, in practice, organizational units went their own ways. Commitment, as demonstrated in actual behavior, was limited to the work group or to the district organization at the most. Saying "yes" but doing "no" seemed to be a tradition, because employees had the feeling that it was not all right to say "no" openly. This was especially true of the relationships between managers and their employees. The cause of the behavior was a lack of openness and honesty. Especially when one has to cooperate with other departments, and initial personal contacts or feelings of belonging to the same district are absent, commitment is low. Therefore, it was necessary for managers to keep in close contact with employees and to organize on a human scale.

Goal-directed and consistent management was judged important, but some of the requirements for effective management seemed not to be fulfilled. For instance, goals were not stated operationally; information about the system to be managed was not available or was too late and incomplete; and the condition of possessing a skill mix comparable to the complexity of the system was far from fulfilled. Because managers were very limited in their behavioral alternatives, they tended to manage too

personally. There was a tendency for personality styles, rather than effective skills, to dominate the approach to managerial problems.

The most important condition for effective management is insight into the system to be managed, i.e., having some idea about what the effects of managerial actions will be. With respect to this, managers complained that they had no real “buttons to push” or “levers to pull,” indicating that they were short of effective instruments for monitoring and intervening in the business.

With respect to this value, managers came up with fundamental questions, such as, “Are we really managing?” and “Can you tell me what management is or should be?”

Openness and honesty were assessed as essential as thinking and acting Telecom-wide. Managers at headquarters (all respondents did not work there) were viewed as “playing all sorts of political games.” Because business was too personalized, managers tended to overreact in very personal ways, and because such personal actions tended to evoke personal reactions, the effectiveness and commitment of the organization as a whole were affected. Even communication about the introduction and progress of Perspective was not always open and honest. It was deemed important that employees realize that being open and honest works best. This implied, for instance, that it was better to refuse a task that was judged too difficult to accomplish.

Openness and honesty were identified as necessary requirements for the emerging coaching function of managers. Coaching requires that a manager be able to model the desired behavior and presupposes that the manager is able to transfer this behavior to employees.

Practical management/belief in action means doing business in a direct way, without organizational detours. This norm differentiates between the former state company and the present private-sector company. Practical management requires being direct, clear, consistent, and personal, and providing for mutual feedback. As a consequence, managers are much more actively involved in the work of employees. It is a challenge to maintain the right balance between explorative, operational, and outgoing behavior and controlling behavior.

Step 3. Commitment to Change

When managing organizational change, it is important to maintain a balance between being too open and being too tight-reined. One does not want an abdication of responsibility. During this step, it is common to find too much talking and too little real and effective action. Although a lot of communication takes place, most of the energy is devoted to circumstantial matters. A lot of time is spent in meetings. The reason for this is that at a deeper, cultural or affective level, participants fundamentally disagree, and meetings turn into a permanent state of “storming” and “norming” (Tuckman, 1965). Because managers and employees are occupied with

creating a new culture and shaping new group norms, there is little time left for “performing.” Team building and power plays obstruct effective performance.

A common observation was that these step-3 dynamics were much more positive within a Telecom district than between a district and other parts of the organization, e.g., business units or the head office. In the first case, a general feeling of commitment, of being a team, existed. Because this was limited to the work group or district only, team play between more distant Telecom organizational units was experienced as being “ordered about.” There was no reinforcement of the values of thinking and acting Telecom-wide, commitment, and openness and honesty. Still, respondents agreed that this was a mutual phenomenon.

Step 4. Learning to Manage Interfaces

Cooperation was a crucial ability in the new organization. Working together now meant cooperating with internal and external partners (customers, employees, colleagues, suppliers, managers, etc.). Cooperation implies contract (working) and contact (together). The essence of what is to be learned in step 4 is the transition from vertical, hierarchical commandment to horizontal, mutual adjustment. Being ordered was replaced by calling on individual responsibility. Because internal and external customers are so near, the possibility of getting lost in the organization is diminished, and the relationship necessarily has to go well. Everybody knows for whom he or she is working.

The ability to cooperate under conditions of contract and commitment is called “interface management.” Managing interfaces requires being able to both disagree and negotiate (contract), and to maintain good basic relationships (contact). An additional complication is that the number of interfaces increases rapidly in today's business. Thus, interface management not only implies the shared values of commitment (contact), openness and honesty (contact), and goal-directed and consistent management (contract), but also of thinking and acting Telecom-wide. In addition to mutual acceptance (contact), interface management also is based on focus on output (contract), so the shared values of belief in action and practical management also are implied by it.

Emphasizing work results confirms standardization of output as a mechanism of work coordination. But the latter requires a clear and strong structure that answers questions such as “Where am I in the organization?,” “For whom do I work?,” and “Who is my customer?” At the same time that work becomes more professionalized, standardization of skills becomes a crucial coordinating instrument (Mintzberg, 1983). With interface management, work production skills themselves become output. Customers do not buy products but the way these products are produced and delivered. This is a well-known phenomenon in service marketing. But also in the domain of product marketing, added value is created by the way in which products are delivered. Therefore competition is value competition. That is why shared values

constitute the core of the organization. They are not just incidental organizational “flavors,” but core products and core competencies at the same time.

An example of interface management is presented by the ethnographic account by Barker (1993) of “how an organization's control system evolved...from hierarchical, bureaucratic control to concertive control in the form of self-managing teams.” Actions of organizational members were controlled by “a system of value-based normative rules.” Barker also stresses the possible disadvantages of a much tighter, internalized, mutual system of social or group control. In that case, social commitment and business-like contract are not in balance anymore.

Interface management also has become more important in the private domain. For instance, some recent surveys on sociocultural trends in the Netherlands demonstrated that men and women stay oriented primarily to maintaining good—especially paired—relationships (Van den Akker & Halman, 1994). In contrast to the private domain, however, learning to manage diverse interfaces in work organizations tends to be quickly mistranslated into working according to traditional hierarchical patterns. It is easy for an employee to take the role of underdog (avoiding the burden of responsibility) and for a manager to act as top dog (being in command). Unfortunately, the same kind of boss-subordinate pattern tends to be translated to relationships with customers.

Step 5. Embedding the Values in Structures and Systems

A number of system approaches were undertaken to ensure the anchoring of the new behaviors in structures and procedures. Some examples of newly developed social systems are

- Recruitment and selection: Young people with higher vocational training and university-level qualifications are recruited according to a shared-values profile and are selected with the help of assessment-center methods, in which managers participate (Jansen & Stoop, 1994).
- Management development: Employees bear responsibility for their own careers, and the company merely supports, coaches, and facilitates.
- Job-performance appraisal: Managers encourage the delegation of responsibilities. Appraisals are confined to results and outputs. Appraisals, salary adjustments, and personnel development are interconnected and reaffirm one another.
- Job content: People are not confined to boxes but are allowed to exercise their individual entrepreneurship and be judged by their performance. Job descriptions state the results that work must yield and suggest ways of achieving them. There is no interference. Each job is regarded as a business unit and each employee as an entrepreneur. The idea is to be big but small at the same time, because the company is a network of many small enterprises.

Step 6. Making Behavior Clearly Visible and Quantifiable

In addition to the interviews, the shared values were measured by a questionnaire (Bon & Jansen, 1993). A set of items was written for each value. These items were administered on a pilot basis to a random sample of 917 employees. Factor-and scale-analyses revealed that the following four factors were sufficient to reproduce the observed structure of inter-item correlations:

- Thinking and acting Telecom-wide
- Job commitment: to feel oneself in one's element at work
- Goal-directed and practical management
- Openness and honesty

Thus, thinking and acting Telecom-wide and openness and honesty are reproduced, and the original scales for goal-directed and consistent management and practical management are combined into goal-directed and practical management. Finally, a new scale emerged, indicating the degree to which an employee feels in his or her element at work. It indicates job commitment, which is only a part of the shared values of commitment to the organization and the work team, as defined in Figure 1.

On a scale from one to ten (the common grading scale in the Netherlands, with "one" denoting minimal, and "ten" denoting excellent), the factor ratings were:

- Thinking and acting Telecom-wide: 6.5 (above average). There were no differences between employees working in the district sectors of finance, human resource management, logistics, commerce, and engineering.
- Job commitment: 7.4 (well above average). Respondents in the domain of human resource management rate this factor "good" (8.1).
- Goal-directed and practical management: 7.3 (well above average). Respondents working in human resource management rate this factor 8.0 (good).
- Openness and honesty: 7.0 (well above average). No work-domain differences.

These measurements, although obtained in a exploratory study, confirm the interview results. First, all rating are relatively low: above average or well above average. The values thinking and acting Telecom-wide and openness and honesty are rated relatively low. The differences between the human resource management sector and the remaining sectors of the district with respect to goal-directed and practical management and job commitment are remarkable.

Because these results stem from a pilot study, they are of a preliminary nature. At present, new and more sophisticated scales for the shared values are being developed and tested.

WHAT CAN BE LEARNED?

The literature review presented in De Jong and Jansen (1994) shows that, generally, organizational changes carry the seeds of success and failure; which prevails is dependent on the way they are implemented. Taking the step-by-step plan as a point of reference, possible and common failures result from the following:

1. Giving too much weight to contract and disregarding contact. Approaching business reorganization in a too “business-like” manner decreases commitment. It is important to develop commitment as well as stressing assigned goals and tasks.
2. Overstressing contract without devoting attention to the necessary level of employee competence (compare to Gist & Mitchell, 1992).

Formulated in a positive way, two important predictors of success in transforming organizations are commitment and a high level of competence (Locke & Latham, 1990). Thus, the third and fourth steps in implementation are crucial. They enable employees to advance in learning—to make progress in actually changing their ways of working. When this happens, learning becomes a positive experience.

In implementing organizational change, the following also should be taken into account:

1. Watch out for “unfulfilled conditions.” In general, these consist of the quartet of commitment, fairness (people simply want to be treated decently), competence, and agreeableness (compare to Johnson & Ostendorf, 1993).
2. Pay attention to the “micro level” of small-group behavior of employees instead of focusing exclusively on macro organizational structures.
3. Watch out for unexpected side effects (discussed in De Jong & Jansen, 1994).

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