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**Linking Strategic Planning, Team Building, and Roles,**

**Responsibilities, Tasks, and Relationships**

by

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LINKING STRATGIC PLANNING, TEAM BUILDING, AND ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, TASKS, AND RELATIONSHIPS

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Abstract

Faced with rapidly changing conditions and intense global competition, more and more organizations are realizing that to compete effectively for the long-term they must transform how they function. Based on a substantial body of current literature and over twenty years of experience, the author presents a framework and action guidelines for managers in linking strategic planning, team building, and roles, responsibilities, tasks, and relationships in their organizations. The importance of communication, action learning, and identity at the system, group, and individual level is stressed, enabling general managers to think about ways of focusing positive energies for the

accomplishment of desired outcomes that benefit both the organization and the individual.

Introduction

The corporate and organizational foundation within the U. S. is shifting rapidly, perhaps more than at any other time in history. A recent Business Week article (Byrne,

1992) points to some of the major causes: competition is increasingly global and becoming more intense, technology is developing quickly, and the domestic work force is changing profoundly. Ideas about people, management, and organizations have evolved within the context of our cultural values and institutions throughout history. In recent years, we

have witnessed a variety of popularized new streams of managerial thought and direction:

total quality management, customer-service chains, core competencies, reengineering,

time-based competition, empowerment, organizational architecture, and learning organizations. Moreover, old principles still remain valid and reliable: delegation, participation, goal-setting, problem-solving, innovation and creativity, research and development, and entrepreneurship. Truly we have an overbundance of "good things" to choose from today.

Over the years, a substantial body of knowledge has accumulated on the basic concepts and processes of organizational change and development. Unfortunately, a large number of managers remain cynical toward many change efforts (Brief, 1995). The biases include:

\*The history and development of an organization shapes what it is and what it is likely to become.

\*Organizational change efforts are driven as much by fashion as by sound documented need assessment and diagnosis.

\*Many, if not most "new forms" of organizational change really have been around for a long time; they have merely been rediscovered and renamed.

\*Organizational changes tend to occur at the periphery of an organization and often do not survive in the long run; that is, fundamental, lasting changes in the character of an organization are the exception rather than the rule.

\*Managers' words and actions, in reference to organizational change, frequently

do not align--i.e., there are considerable attempts toward change but little actually happens.

\*It is difficult to measure the effectiveness of an organizational change effort; in

many instances it's difficult to determine whether change has occured.

There are indications that as many as two-thirds of total quality management efforts fail (Stewart, 1994). In 1993, a survey of executives in 531 companies who had undergone major change efforts found that the most-often-cited barriers to change were employee resistance and dysfunctional corporate cultures. Dysfunctional culture, in this

instance, was defined as one in which shared values and behavior were in contradiction with the organization's long-term health--for example, an organization recognizing superior individual performers even though teamwork produces the desired outcome on which the future may depend.

Why are organizational change efforts so often disappointing? First, one may begin by looking at top management. A recent survey conducted by Booz, Allen, and Hamilton among senior executives at 27 Fortune Industrial 500 and Service 500 companies (Henkoff, 1994) found that:

1) CEO's still consider cost control as top priority when it comes to increasing profitability, ahead of customer satisfaction and superior technology.

2) Traditional reporting lines still remain with the accounting department reporting directly to the CEO at 85% of the companies, while R&D did so at only 50%.

3) CEO's at a fourth of the companies still got involved in tactical decisions like pricing and packaging changes.

4) CEO's are still evaluating companies based on profits and stock performance, rarely measuring quality, customer satisfaction, and other long-term indicators.

The ideal future organization, traditionally, has been cast as an alternative to bureaucracy. As we approach the twenty-first century, an entire range of new ideas and concepts span the entire breadth of organizations, from strategy to organization structure to performance management, and have been widely popularized. Eccles and Nohria (1992) note, for example, that the "network" organization, one of today's images of the future, resembles the "integrative" organization proposed by Kanter in 1983, which is highly similar to the "organic" organization proposed by Burns and Stalker in 1961; in addition, that model was identified by Pieper in 1931. They also note that arguments for the empowerment of employees are as evident in Mary Parker Follett's writings of the

1920's as they are in contemporary writings.

One of the main driving forces behind the so-called "new management concepts" has been the concern over America's decline in the global economy, since the 1970's, with far-reaching economic, technological, and social changes. Thus, the sum total of interacting forces have brought about a time period of rapid and discontinuous change (Handy, 1990) that we find difficult to cope with, and requires an overall perspective that fosters action and making that action meaningful to people in organizations, both individually and collectively. People strive to make sense out of their environments.

With increasing levels of uncertainty comes anxiety associated with change (Schein, 1993) which can be addressed through knowledge acquisition and insight, habit and skill learning, emotional conditioning, and overcoming learned anxiety. In overcoming anxiety associated with change and providing an action perspective, we may be returning to three basic elements of effective management: communication, action, and individual, group, and organization identity.

The Changing Nature of Work

and Its Influence on the Change Process

In a recent article, Peter Drucker (1994) the noted management scholar, argues that underlying the current malaise of so many organizations worldwide is that their theories of business no longer work. That is, the assumptions on which the organization has been built and is being managed no longer fit reality. These are the assumptions that shape an organization's behavior, dictate its operating decisions, and define what the organization considers as meaningful results.. Reality has changed, but the theory of the business has not changed with it. He further notes the specifications of a valid theory of business: the assumptions about the environment, mission, and core competencies must fit reality and must fit one another. The theory of the business must be known and

understood throughout the organization, and it must be tested constantly. The theory is a hypothesis; that is, it is about things that are in constant change--society, markets,

customers, and technology. Built into every theory of the business, as Drucker emphasizes, must be the ability to change itself.

The very nature of managerial work itself is changing rapidly (Kanter, 1989). Managers are observing formal hierarchy fading away and the clear delineations of title, task, role, unit, even the organization becoming more vague. Faced with extraordinary levels of complexity and interdependency, managers watch as traditional sources of power and motivational tools become obsolete. Organizations are flatter now, containing more avenues for action: cross-functional projects, business-unit joint ventures and alliances, labor/management partnerships, innovation funding that stimulates efforts outside mainline budgets and reporting lines, and close relationships with suppliers and customers. Managers are adding value by working at the junction of organization interfaces, rather than presiding over individual areas or functions. Environmental scanning, monitoring, forecasting, and assessment, traditionally the work of top management and staff

specialists, is now an important part of a manager's job at every level and in every function. Managers must think "outside-and-across" the organization because each unit has a strategic role to play, understanding and contributing and adding value to other parts of the organization.

The noted management scholar, Abraham Zalesniak (1989), even goes so far as to suggest that too many American executives have a misguided sense of" what real work and leadership are all about." He traces this relationship back to the 1930's, when organizations were first considered as social systems; enhancing workplace harmony and creating conditions for cooperation became the accepted definition of the work of management. Because of prevalent human resource theories, according to Zalesniak, we have substituted the balancing of expectations in the workplace for real work, which is the actual performance of the individual and the organization. He advocates that real proficiency breeds self-confidence, which in tum creates confidence in others and high morale. Furthermore, positive and constructive aggressiveness in a manager drives his or

her imagination. This is in sharp contrast with management by indirection and ambiquity which leaves subordinates wondering where they stand, produces anxiety, and causes political jockeying and game-playing.

Perhaps it is fallacious to seek to begin to identify a particular scenario as a future context for any specific recommendations regarding organizational change and development. Rather, it seems most appropriate to suggest that acceptance of change has become a way of life and will remain so in the future. Porter and McKibbin (1988, p. 44) state this conclusion very succinctly:

Instead of recommending changes in the system to cope with some specifically identified changes in the environment, we believe that the system itself should be made as responsive as possible to major changes which may occur. This requires attention to sensing changes as they occur and flexibility with which to

address them. In other words, we recommend institutionalized flexibility to cope

with what has become institutionalized change.

Advocating institutionalized flexibility does not necessarily mean the abandonment of systems and structures that have been built up painstakingly through the years. Nor does it mean only intraorganizational flexibility, as opposed to system-wide flexibility. Instead, there are some identifiable areas where changes seem called for, but the focus of those changes will not be to cope with a particular set of future circumstances. Rather, the intent will be to prepare individuals more effectively for an environment where change has become a permanent feature.

But to build in the ability to change, organizations operating in turbulent and rapidly changing environments find it increasingly difficult to initiate and implement anticipatory changes. David Nadler (1989) notes how the more recent generation of organizational changes are different from what has happened in the past:

1) they typically are initiated by the leaders of organizations rather than consultants or human resource specialists (although they do play important roles);

2) they are closely linked to strategic business issues, not just questions of organizational process or style;

3) most of the changes can be traced directly to outside forces, such as new sources of competition, new technology, deregulation or legal initiatives, maturation of product life cycles, changes in ownership, or fundamental shifts in industry and market structure;

4) these changes influence the total organization (corporation or business unit)

rather than individual strategic business units or departments; and

5) they are profound for the organization and its members because they usually influence organizational values regarding employees, customers, competitors, or products.

Ways of Viewing Organizations and

Developing Organization Models

Based on an extensive literature search across disciplines, Van de Ven and Poole (1995), have identified four basic theories as building blocks for explaining processes of change in organizations. The four theories, briefly outlined in Figure 1, reflect different change events driven by generative mechanisms (event sequences) operating at different organizational levels.

Insert Figure 1 about here

The life-cycle model depicts the process of change in an organization as progressing through a necessary sequence of stages with an institutional, natural, or logical program prescribing the specific contents of the stages. The goal-directed model views development as a cycle of goal formulation, implementation, evaluation, and modification of goals based on learning by the organization. This sequence emerges through purposeful interaction among individuals within the organization. In the confront-

discuss model of development, conflicts emerge between elements of opposing views that collide to produce a synthesis, which in time becomes the main theme for the next cycle of progression. Thus, confrontation and conflict between opposing forces generate the cycle. An evolutionary model of development consists of a repetitive sequence of variation, selection, and retention events among elements in the designated population

(organization); competition for scarce resources between those inhabiting the organization generates the evolutionary cycle.

Van de Ven and Poole summarize that the two dimensions of unit and mode of change classify the four theories or models of organizational change in terms of action and process. These differ from previously developed theories of change (incremental versus radical, first-order versus second-order, etc.) because they classify changes by their

starting or process conditions, rather than by their consequences or outcomes.

As one author has stated (Jick, 1993), "change", in its most comprehensive sense, is planned or unplanned response to pressures and driving forces. Various driving forces have caused organizations to change or at least modify their approaches and practices for a number of decades. But when change is broadened to a multinational scope, the forces multiply; competition is more intense, complexity develops, strategic options increase, and renewal and adaptation are requirements for survival.

Linda Ackerman (1986) provides a useful approach in categorizing changes common in organizations--developmental, transitional, and transformational change. With each category of change varying in scope and depth, she notes how the depth and complexity of implementation grows substantially from developmental (education and skill building) to transitional (temporary positions and structures) to transformational (developing new beliefs, values, and systems). The three categories can be briefly summarized as follows:

\*Developmental change: the basic improvement of what is, a skill, method, or

condition, that under the circumstances, is not reaching current expectations.

\*Transitional change: the implementation of a new state of being for the organization, where current practices are replaced by something new--for example, restructuring or introducing new systems, processes, or technologies. This requires transitions of a temporary nature such as experimental sites,

pilot tests, or gradual phasing-in of different operations.

\*Transformational change: the emergence of a new state of being, but typified by a reconceptualization of the organization's mission, culture, critical success factors, structure, and leadership.

Carefully crafting and orchestrating change and development efforts has become of strategic importance to the organization. Drawing on a number of noted authorities in the field (Beer, 1980; Beer, Eisenstat, and Spector,1990; Beer, Spector, Lawrence, Mills, and Walton, 1985; Lippitt, 1982; and Nadler and Tushman, 1977) a general organization model can be created (see Figure 2) for analyzing change and development patterns.

More specific models will need to be developed by an organization given their unique set of external conditions, resource capabilities, philosophies and values, and desired performance outcomes. The general model presented views the organization functioning with an external environment made up of both the macro-environment and industry driving forces, long-range plans relating the firm to its environment in creating sustainable competitive advantages, organization needs and requirements to address the plans in providing flexibility and adaptability, and desired performance outcomes determined by the organization for the planning period. The linking arrows of the model indicate the interrelated nature of the components leading to desired performance outcomes.

Insert Figure 2 about here

It has become increasingly important to understand trends, issues, and patterns and causal relationships in relation to economic, social, political, regulatory, technological, and ecological factors influencing the competitive situation within specific industries. The assessment of context, strategy, and performance, being highly interdependent, serves to extend the traditional boundaries of strategic analyses. The implications of context, strategy, and performance within the framework of organizational requirements place emphasis on developmental systems in order to remain competitive in an environment characterized by change and uncertainty.

David Nadler (1989) and other researchers offer several insights into organizational change, based on experiences with over twenty-five organizations in recent years and on the comprehensive literature base on system-wide change. They identify a number of important characteristics in what they refer to as "organizational

reorientations":

\*Many large-scale organizational changes take as long as 3-7 years; the dynamics of managing change over the long-term is different from one involving a given beginning and end point.

\*Types of change must be considered across two dimensions--the scope of the change (parts of the organization) and the position of the change to major external events impacting the organization.

\*Effective change is characterized by sound diagnostic management thought which

extends beyond merely "mimicking" other organizations.

\*A vision is developed and communicated which fully describes the desired future

state for the organization. Transitional stages are also fully considered.

\*Organizational leaders create energy for changes by communicating a sense of urgency usually with information that challenges assumptions about the current state of the organization.

\*The change is clearly linked to the core strategic issues of the organization change themes can be positioned across units and related and adapted to each unit's particular operating situation. It is difficult to sustain more than three key change themes during any specific strategic planning period.

\*Successful change leadership extends beyond a "magic leader" approach to building a broad base of leader support throughout the organization with commensurate investments in groups and individuals as co owners of the change process.

\*Successful reorientations involve a mixture of both planned and unplanned action; the unplanned action is based primarily on learning cycles that serve to reshape and strengthen the change during transition stages.

\*Effective change management uses as many relevant mechanisms as feasible and focuses on such elements as goal-setting, performance outcomes, resource allocations, reward systems, and information systems.

\*Successful changes are characterized by a substantial investment in time, one of the organization's most scarce resources. by senior management and the leaders of the process throughout the organization.

\*Each organization level involved in the change takes adequate time to understand, accept, commit, educate, apply, and integrate the change and deal with it from an operational viewpoint.

The Linkage of Strategic Planning: Context, Strategy, and Performance

Various actions influence an organization's competitive situation in the markets and industries within which it is positioned. Central to the issue of competitiveness are

relationships between organizational context, strategy, and performance. Executives interpret the phenomena in the firm's external environment and internal resource capabilities in terms of their implications for the industry and the firm. These implications are dependent upon the specific characteristics of each industry and the firm.

Prerequisite for approaching the long-term planning process is the ability to thoroughly analyze and understand the relationships of the organization to its environment. One place to start is with a basic descriptive approach: What is the organization's context, strategy, and performance? But a full assessment, at the outset,

requires reflective questions addressing the historical context of the strategy: Why did we chose the strategy or strategies? How well have we done? Why did the results occur? Did the support structure (tactics, objectives, policies) have the effects we sought? What was the influence of the different contextual factors on strategy?

An organization's context includes both external and internal elements. Contextual

factors create the opportunities, threats, risks, and offsets for managers. Key questions for contextual analysis are:

\*What are the key driving forces or conditions in the external environment?

\*What contextual factors shape the internal resource capabilities of the firm?

\*How do these factors influence the firm's strategy and performance?

Strategy is seldom totally clear, comprehensive, and complete in many firms and it is necessary to deduce strategy from statements and action, both written and verbal. Also, strategy can be inconsistent, for it is generally the outcome of conflict or compromise on the part of different constituencies. Strategy analysis can address the following:

\*What is the firm's strategy?

\*What are the relative priorities among objectives to support strategy?

\*How are the tactics, objectives, and policies interrelated? Are they contradictory or reinforcing?

\*How will strategy contribute to achieving objectives?

Analyzing a firm's performance requires assessing how well it did and, more important, what gave rise to the results. Understanding causal relationships helps to strengthen and deepen the manager's ability to project future actions and outcomes. Questions addressed in performance analysis include:

\*What has been the firm's performance in key outcome areas?

\*What has led to these outcomes? What different relationships can we identifY

for each outcome area?

\*What are the implications of these outcomes for future strategy and performance? The linkage of traditional long-range planning processes appears to be changing

with dramatic changes in the environment. Of important note is a series of articles by Christopher Bartlett and Sumantra Ghoshal (1994, 1995) on the changing roles of general management. The authors, having spent five years researching twenty leading European, U. S., and Japanese firms, note several critical transformations (summarized in Figure 3) that are taking place and that are likely to accelerate in the future.

Insert Figure 3 about here

First, Barlett and Ghoshal advocate moving from setting strategy to defining purpose. Managers must change their ways of thinking and setting priorities: beyond designing corporate strategy, they must work hard at shaping a shared institutional purpose. This requires embedding corporate ambition by capturing employees' attention and interest, getting the organization more involved, and creating momentum. It also involves instilling organizational values by building on core values, sowing the messages with sincerity and action, and measuring progress.

Second, the authors have found that while top-down structures of corporate divisions provide managers with tight control and allow companies to grow, they also fragment resources and create a virtual organization that prevents small units from sharing information and strengths with one another. Structural changes, such as special projects, alliances, and acquisitions, have not solved the problems. The authors predict that in the future managers will need more focus on horizontal processes rather than vertical structures and the job of the general manager will be more to promote three core organizational processes: frontline entrepreneurship, competence building, and organizational renewal.

Third, Bartlett and Ghoshal note that, in the postwar years, planning and control systems were the tools that enabled companies to grow and assisted managers in dealing with the factors associated with growth. But the systems that allowed managers to control the organization also inhibited creativity and initiative; today the challenge is to engage the knowledge and skills of each person in the organization in what the authors refer to as "the individualized corporation." Characteristics of the individualized corporation include developing leaders and deploying them strategically within the organization maintaining direct personal contact focusing on real, tangible issues and challenge, and creating an environment in which individuals mirror themselves. The basic rationale here is that given the same information, incentives, and authority to act, frontline managers will reach the same decisions that the top would have reached.

The Team Building Linkage

It appears that team building can serve to enhance effectiveness and serve as a linkage between long-range or strategic planning and organization structure, process, and role and task alignment. It also provides a greater opportunity for the use of knowledge

and intellectual capital for those firms who use teams in a results-oriented manner. Current views are that perhaps as much as three-fourths of value-added derives from

knowledge and that these "intellectual assets" are normally worth three to four times the tangible book value of an organization (Stewart, 1994). Some have distinguished between human capital, the source of innovation and renewal which grows through recruitment and selection, training, and education, and structural capital, such as information systems, knowledge of markets and customers, and management focus, which turns individual knowledge into group knowledge. Unfortunately, when asked how much knowledge their firms effectively utilize, most executives respond that it is somewhere between 20-25%. Thus, it is evident that a gap may exist between an organization's actual knowledge and applied knowledge, or the use of intellectual capital.

Overall, teams and project work have the potential of creating linkages between strategic issues, and organizational unit, group, and individual context. Growing expectations of change, either planned or unplanned, put increasing pressure on the organizational context to eventually reform and renew management systems. Unfortunately, formal changes in key management systems such as those used for measurement and reward, performance appraisal, and resource allocation, often are made late in the process (Doz and Thanheiser, 1993). Such changes can serve to stabilize and

institutionalize the results of the renewal process, and provide the basis for establishing the new capabilities in the organization.

The top management commitment to a set of priorities, frameworks and concepts

has to be consistently adhered to over time, throughout the process, in order to be effective. This also involves the acceptance of the pivotal role of middle managers as change leaders in the process and willingness to realistically address the "theory in use" of the organization.

Effective team building can assist in reframing mindsets, fostering a new strategic

concensus, and redefining processes embedded in the organizational context. It can also be oriented toward "learning by doing" and a "solution-discovery approach". One of the main fallacies about organizational change is a belief that new thinking will lead to new

performance and behavior. But, as any trainer or educator is aware, the impact of courses, programs, and materials are quite short-lived, unless applied and reinforced through experience. Applied to problem-solving, analytical concepts, models, and frameworks for performance results, the situation becomes even worse.

Effective change, therefore, can take place only through a process of personal discovery and experience. The process can be structured, but it involves a discovery path, not merely relying on receiving new information and new concepts. The discovery is not just cognitive, but also emotional and relational. It is not just discovering new frames of reference and behavior leading to improved performance, but more importantly discarding old ones, an act of "unlearning", which adds an emotional dimension to the process (Lewin, 1951; Argyris, 1991). Relational discovery involves experiencing and testing new forms of behavior, action, and relationships. In this sense, "learning by doing" is not just

an individual experience, but a collective one, in particular today as more effective managerial action revolves around communication, action, behaviors, and identity in relationships.

The widespread use of teams in the U. S. began in the 1980's as traditional industries attempted to react to growing competition by forming quality circles that met periodically to discuss ways of improving quality. A survey conducted in 1993 by The Center for Effective Organizations at the University of Southern California, found that

65% of companies were still using quality circles, down slightly from the base year of

1987. This was attributed to the fact that circles are good for solving minor quality problems, but since they had not accompanied changes in the way work is done, they were not contributing to substantial changes in productivity and improvement (Dumaine, 1994).

It appears that today the most popular forms of teams are work teams, which include high-performance or self-managed teams, and special-purpose problem-solving teams. The USC survey also found that 91% of companies use problem-solving teams, about a third more than in 1987, and around 20% of employees are participating on such

teams. While problem-solving teams are temporary, made up of knowledge workers who gather to solve a specific problem and then disband, work teams are permanent in nature and focus on daily work and task assignments. The USC survey also found that 68% of firms were using self-managed or high-performance teams, but that only 10% of workers were in such teams, hardly a statement of full-scale implementation.

Why has the U. S. been so slow in adopting team concepts and processes? Robert

Cole (1989), from a historical perspective, analyzed why American firms, during 1960-

1985, tended to move more slowly and less effectively in adopting small group activities in the workplace in comparison to firms in Japan and Sweden. Using what he referred to as the standard model of diffusion process (motivate-search-discovery-transmission­ decision-implementation), he attempted to explain why, in the three countries, small groups were used in order to expand employees’ autonomy and control. In the U.S., the

driving forces were internationalization of the economy and declining competitive position

with the strategic responses of capital investment and offshore facilities and suppliers. He cited the underlying objectives motivating the responses as improved productivity, product quality, improved worker satisfaction, and alternative profit opportunities. Cole

concluded that American firms during this time period "tried less and accomplished less"

and attributed the consequences to the national infrastructure created for the diffusion of group or team development in the workplace in comparison to the other countries.

Our knowledge about how teams approach projects and assignments, respond to challenges, and perform are becoming more refined and helpful in assisting those who want to further develop the potential of teams in their organizations. Interviewing several

hundred people working in fifty teams across some thirty different companies, Katzenbach

and Smith (1993), attempted to determine a more in-depth understanding of the nature and processes of team development and their potential. Among the more salient findings included:

1) While a demanding performance challenge was essential to the formation and development of teams, it was not sufficient by itself Successful teams had attended to team basics: appropriate size, clear purpose and goals, sufficient interpersonal and group skills, a shared approach, and individual and mutual accountability.

2) Teams do not have to be in contradiction with the hierarchical structure of most organizations. In fact, teams are the best way to integrate across structural boundaries and to both design and energize core processes.

3) Teams naturally integrated performance and learning. Teams are necessarily

made up of highly committed individuals who seek out what they need to know to get their job done. They translate longer term purposes into definable performance goals and then develop skills needed to meet those goals. While technical and interpersonal skills are required, teams need to develop them in response to the working needs of the group, not as an end in themselves.

4) The key to developing full potential of teams lies in an organization's

willingness to recognize their unique potential to deliver results and understand the benefits they provide: development of individual members, team achievements, and superior organization-wide performance.

5) The price. of disguising a team approach either by intention or ineptitude can be high. Employees resent the imposition on their time and priorities and the diversion from their individual goals, costs can outweigh benefits, and serious distrust can develop in an organization that can undermine morale and productivity.

It has long been recognized that the primary work group is the most important sub-system within an organization. The work group serves as the context and focus for a) the contact point between the individual and the organization; b) the primary social relations and support for the individual employee; and c) a determination of the employee's sense of organziational identity and reality. The extent to which members of the primary work group work well together and the extent to which they work well with

other groups and teams in the organization, in part, will determine the overall effectiveness of the organization. Groups and teams transform language and collective thinking skills,

so that groups can reliably develop knowledge and ability greater than the sum of individual members' talents.

The level of organizational predictability has changed today, and managers must keep in mind the influence it has played on individual and group behavior. Stevenson and Moldoveanu (1995), in a recent article, compare today's level of predictability with that of past eras and its effect on the interaction between individual and group behavior. In the mid-twentieth century, global organizations began to promise employees economic security, self-fulfillment, and respect for performing clearly delineated tasks. Employees were willing to make sacrifices, and both organization and individual were willing to invest in training and development for the mutual expectation of future rewards. This can be compared to today, with intense competition and rapid change destroying predictability; individuals appear to keep commitments to a minimum.

The authors emphasize that organizations must recognize the time and energy spent in yielding short-term management efficiencies through the use of many current practices, such as reengineering, continuous improvement, matrix management, and virtual organizations which ignore human needs and in fact may be destroying what holds organizations together. The more that managers can make clear to employees and other stakeholders which courses of action will improve their lives, the more employees can focus on creating value for the organization. It appears that a more effective linkage between strategic planning and team building has the potential of improving this condition.

What are the expectations of the effective linkage between strategic planning and team building? By merging long-term strategic objectives with short-term improvement projects and change, the organization can translate direction into reality and resist the temptations of activity-centered programs that rely on broad-based approaches and are more concerned with time-consuming preparations than with measurable gains. In

contrast, results-driven programs rely on incremental change, building on what works and what does not work. They tap into underused capability and resources to get the program started (Schaffer and Thomson, 1992). This can be as simple as asking units to set and achieve a few short-term performance goals, test some managerial, process, or technical innovations, periodically review progress, capture the essential learning, and reformulate the approach based on the learning. Thus, results-driven improvement can be an empirical process in which the experience of each phase becomes the information for shaping the next phase of development. This enables senior managers to refine strategies and timetables and, in consultation with teams, work out the next round of objectives.

It is at the juncture of the individual and the group that learning can either be enhanced or inhibited, even if the effort is directed toward a results-orientation. In his early work of the 90's, Chris Argyris (1991, 1994) looks at human behavior patterns that block learning in organizations, explores why professionals are prone to these patterns,

and how firms can improve the ability of their managers and employees to learn. Based on fifteen years of in-depth study of managers, he suggests two possible explanations:

1) Most people define learning too narrowly as problem-solving, so they focus on identifying and correcting errors in the external environment. Problem-solving is important, but if learning is to persist, managers and employees must also look inward; they need to reflect critically on their own behavior, identity ways they often unknowingly contribute to the organization's problems, and then change how they act. In essence, they must learn how the way they go about defining and solving problems can be a source of problems in its own right.

2) Because many professionals are almost always successful, rarely experiencing failure; they have never learned how to learn from failure. So when "single-loop" learning strategies go wrong, they become defensive, tend to screen out criticism, and usually place blame. In addition, companies focus on creating new organizational structures, compensation programs, performance reviews, etc., that are designed to create motivated

and committed employees. But companies make false assumptions that getting people to learn is largely a matter of motivation; when people have the right attitude and commitment, learning automatically occurs. Effective "double-loop" learning is not simply a function of how people feel, it is a reflection of how people think, the rules of reasoning

they use to design and implement their actions. Thus, teaching people how to learn and reason about their behavior in new and more effective ways breaks down defenses that block learning patterns. This can be accomplished in a team environment.

One of the most promising new processes in team building is the learning

laboratory or "microworld", constructing real-life settings in which teams can learn how to learn together (Senge, 1990; Kim, 1993). Although most management teams have difficulty learning (enhancing their collective knowledge and capacity to create), in other domains team learning is the norm rather than the exception, for example, team sports and the performing arts. But, as expressed by a number of authors, the process by which great teams are created is, by and large, absent from most organizations, a process of continual movement between practice and performance.

Comprehensive approaches are emerging for guiding, designing, and constructing effective learning laboratories (practice fields) for teams. First, since team learning in organizations is an individual-to-individual and individual-to-system phenomenon, learning laboratories must combine meaningful business issues with interpersonal dynamics.

Second, the factors that thwart learning about complex business issues must be eliminated in the learning laboratory. Chief among these is the inability to experience the long-term, systemic consequences of key strategic decisions. Third, new learning skills must be developed. One constraint on learning is the inability of managers to reflect insightfully on their assumptions, and to inquire effectively into each other's assumptions. Therefore, educational value must be stressed versus entertainment value of many simulations where there is no connection between experiments in the learning lab and real life experiments.

Peter Drucker (1991) advocates that the single greatest challenge facing managers in the developed countries of the world in the future will be to raise the productivity of knowledge and service organizations. This challenge, he believes, will dominate the management agenda of the several decades, and will ultimately determine the competitive performance of organizations, impacting society and quality of life in every industrialized nation. One of his suggestions for "working smarter" is building continuous learning into an organization at the group or unit level, by asking employees to become teachers. Restructuring or designing the unit or job and then trying to teach the employee the new way to do it cannot sustain ongoing learning. Education and training is only the beginning of learning; the greatest benefit of education comes from doing something better that we already know how to do. Equally important is that knowledge and service employees can learn most effectively when they teach the best way to improve productivity is to ask colleagues to present to others. We are accustomed to hearing that, in this information age, every organization has to become a learning institution; Drucker stresses that it must become a teaching institution as well.

The Linkage of Roles, Responsibilities, Tasks, and Relationships

Traditionally, understanding performance and competitiveness involved observing and monitoring the appropriate outcomes, relying heavily on examining relative position and advantage, and analyzing industry structure and critical success factors. But, as Hamel and Prahalad (1993) have noted, through years of research, we analyze companies and their situations in great detail to address the "what" of competitiveness and in many instances do not understand the "why".

Much like medical doctors, managers search for underlying symptoms of patients, rather than treat the manifestations of outward or inward signs of illness. All to often, managers pay attention to factors or forces, eager to externalize the causes of decline and

the responsibility for it. Some organizations fail to benefit from the inherent advantages of their context and others manage to escape the disadvantages.

Performance and competitiveness is born in the gap between a company's resources and its goals. As Hamel and Prahalad stress, to understand '"'why" some organizations create new forms of sustainable competitive advantage while others "watch and follow", it is necessary to look at the strategic frames of managers. Historically, being good at strategic planning meant pursuing opportunities that fit the organization's resources. This can obscure an approach in which "stretch" supplements "fit" and good strategic planning means creating a gap between ambition, what is achieveable, and resources. It appears that managers at highly competitive companies are more effective in several ways: by concentrating resources around strategic goals, by accumulating resources more efficiently, by complementing one kind of resource capability with another, by conserving scarce resources whenever they can, and by recovering resources from the market place as quickly as possible in creating value for the firm.

In order to create value for the long-term, effective managers are revitalizing and renewing their organizations. Renewal and revitalization involves enhancing the abilities of, and contributions made by, managers, workers, and the organization as a whole to

cope with an increasingly competitive environment. Thus, organizations are reducing their exclusive reliance on the authority of management, on rules and procedures, and on strict and narrow divisions of work specialization. Instead, people at all levels are involved in decision making; teamwork is encouraged among functions, business units, labor and management; information concerning performance and competitive environment is shared and communicated throughout the organization; and responsibility and accountability are pushed far down the hierarchy.

These changes have resulted in a flatter, less hierarchical, and more flexible organization. They motivate employees at all levels to take initiative in reducing costs, improving quality, and responding to customer needs. In turn, this new organization

demands different patterns of management and employee involvement and committment plus a redefinition of organizational roles, responsibilities, tasks, and relationships. Though such changes appear basic, they never occur easily.

To be a manager requires more than a title, a big office, and other outward symbols of rank. It requires competence and performance of a high order. But does the job demand genius? Is it done by intuition or by method? How does the manager do his work?

A manager has two specific tasks. The first is creation of a true whole that is larger than the sum of its parts, a productive entity that turns out more than the sum of the resources put into it. One analogy is the conductor of a symphony orchestra, through whose effort, vision, and leadership individual instrumental parts become the living whole of a musical performance. But the conductor

has the composer's score; he is only interpreter. The manager is both composer

and conductor.

This task requires the manager to make effective whatever strength there is in his resources--above all, in the human resources--and neutralize whatever there is of weakness. This is the only way in which a genuine whole can be created.

This quote from Peter F. Drucker's Management Tasks, Responsibilities, and

Practices (1974, p. 398) likens the job of a manager to that of a composer and conductor. A consistently identified aspect of the manager's job concerns the effective utilization of the organization's human resources. Today we find that organizations that are successful in renewal processes are those where managers help to orchestrate and influence substantive change through improved coordination and cooperation; decision making; work design; and concern for people and their roles and relationships.

It is important to note that effectiveness and success for the long-term cannot be solely defined on the improvement of financial performance of an organization. In the short run, financial performance is influenced by many situational factors, including market share, cost reduction initiatives, and capital strength, as well as by past investment

decisions in development and technology. The quality of these decisions, themselves a

function of the decision-making processes and administrative competence of the past, can

influence performance for many years, but is not solely responsible for positioning the firm for the long run in highly competitive environments.

Most managers know that radical changes are needed in the way their

organizations function. What is less obvious is just how to proceed if those changes are to be accomplished. For long-term competitive success in the decades ahead, it will not be enough to restructure, downsize, or rationalize physical assets; the organization itself must be revitalized and constantly renewed. In a dynamic environment, traditional hierachical management style becomes obsolete. More promising are new models in which all members of the organization share in the responsibility for making decisions and coordinating activities. They understand their roles, tasks, and relationships as part of a team and unit and how those contributions influence the performance of the whole.

But old habits and philosophies are difficult to replace because of resistance caused

by a variety of factors. Hundreds of hopeful organizational initiatives, from training programs to quality circles to a myriad of new human resource systems, have ended in disappointment, and heightened resistance of those involved with the next change initiative. The role of strategy, team development, and organization design is foremost

among new models for improving organizational effectiveness. Most managers do not pay sufficient attention to these elements because conceptual frameworks and models have not been fully developed for understanding design alternatives. Managers need to have expertise in such questions and analyses in order to assist their organizations to understand the alternatives that are available and to act on those alternatives.

Beer, Eisenstat, and Spector (1990) conducted a five-year study of several corporations trying to transform fundamental patterns of management and explored why some efforts were more effective than others. From their research, the authors discovered several principles of change management that ran counter to conventional wisdom. Profound and lasting organizational renewal, they observed, required greater coordination, competence, and commitment among all members of the organization; no top-down

programmatic change effort could accomplish everything at once. The most successful firms in the study built up from the bottom, initiating systemic change in individual plants or divisions. At least initially, renewal was driven by general managers at that level, while executives created a corporate climate that supported and endorsed the change.

Recognizing that a premature focus on revamping systems and structures can alienate employees rather than build their confidence and commitment, the authors stressed task alignment and the development of roles, responsibilities, and relationships at the unit level. The early stages of the change are used to build consensus among

organization members as to strategic and competitive problems and appropriate responses. Change is then introduced in an informal, ad hoc manner, and only later consolidated through formal policies, structures, and systems.

The authors also note that revitalization is not the only way to make an organization more competitive. Cost reduction, acquisition and divestiture, asset rationalization, and the introduction of new systems are also ways to create a more competitive organization. They change the economics of the organization and introduce new and valuable technology. They do not, however, improve coordination and teamwork. Nor do they create the commitment and competence employees must have to sustain high levels of coordination. In fact, as the authors state, they often cause a decrease in these valued human and organizational sources of competitive advantage.

The authors argue that improved teamwork, coordination, commitment, and competence are essential for managing continuous improvements in quality, cost, and products/services--the outcomes essential to compete in the 90's and beyond.

Designing Action Seminars for Organizational Learning

The preceding sections have provided illustrations of the linkages between

strategic planning, team building, and roles, responsibilities, tasks, and relationships. Enough detail has been introduced to sketch out the mechanics of the process. Now it is possible to develop a more systematic basis in order to explain how action can be taken to go about shifting normative behaviors in particular situations.

Discussion is a significant factor in aiding team members within an organization to become explicit about the norms which guide their behavior. A discussion based seminar is an example of the kind of learning experience necessary for developing the skills essential for talking with others and providing avenues for people to take action in a more constructive way. The discussion seminar can be a process in which work teams come face to face with issues of linking strategy, team building, and role and task alignments. Various ways of increasing the effectiveness of the group can be examined.

When an organization does not have someone capable of leading a discussion, a professional discussion leader can be brought into the situation. Skills and talents vary from person to person, but a discussion leader is trained how to promote discussion by keeping the topic in focus, asking questions of members to bring out their points of view, providing a forum for maximum participation, and helping to bring out conflicting points of view. The alternative is for those who work together in the team to acquire these discussion leadership skills. But it may not be necessary to bring a leader in from the outside or even from another part of the organization if it is already routine for team members to come together to discuss a problem, find an answer to it, and then separate.

A rule of thumb is that at least two people should collaborate in designing and leading a seminar. One of these is the line manager, whose ultimate reponsibility it is to ensure the successful conduct of the event. He or she is the person in charge, with the managerial responsibility for initiating discussions and leading those within the group to higher levels of understanding and effectiveness. The other person often is a training and development professional, either an internal consultant or an outside expert who is brought into the organization for the purpose of assisting with the specific seminar. The

training and development professional, who works with the line manager, is successful when he or she provides technical and facilitative support rather than active leadership.

The key to an educational learning experience like the seminar is to provide participants with ways of using the linkages model to connect with the real business situation at hand. The best demonstration of the usefulness of the model is for busy people to learn and understand how it can make a direct impact in their own performance, their work team, and in that of the entire organization. This cannot happen in a short

period of time. Participants will need time to practice the new skills. But when they grasp the total influence of the linkages model and the impact on actual performance and

working relationships, they will have a strong incentive to learn, reason, and understand

not in just the seminar but in all of their roles, tasks, and relationships.

One approach in developing seminar materials is to write short case studies that

are specific to the organization for each of the linkage model elements. In this manner, the case series represents an actual environment that the participants are living with at the

time, or aspects that they may be unsuccessful in dealing with for the future. Thus, the cases become the focal point of discussion and extended analyses and action planning. The other alternative, if people need to be motivated to change and there is substantial resistance to the change, is to provide a case series from other companies available through a number of publishers that closely resembles the current and projected situation for the participants. Discussion will then normally take on a transfer of learning to the

members of the seminar. Background notes and other supplementary materials can also be provided.

Almost all the problems that are likely to arise from case discussions of how the work group deals with the linkages model can be grappled with in a seminar that lasts from 8 to 12 hours. The seminar can be conducted in one working day or it may extend over two days to cover more complex case materials developed in advance of the event.

The advantage of a two-day seminar--starting after lunch on day one and resuming on the morning of day two--is that participants can ponder and review what they have learned on day one before returning the next day. This consolidation of thoughts and learning can often add substantial benefit to the outcomes.

The advantage of a continuous one-day seminar is that participants can get involved and stay involved without interruption. Many times this intensive concentration is necessary for achieving beneficial results. The case studies and related materials, if they are extensive, will need to be provided well in advance of the seminar. The group may also need to be provided with a pre-briefing on the seminar and the use of case studies at approximately the same time as they receive the materials packet and instructions.

The seminar should include all those who can contribute and take advantage of the

linkage model in enhancing their learning and understanding. When you are in doubt, it is best to err on the side of broad attendance, but the group size should remain manageable. Otherwise, you may exclude members of a reference group or even members of the primary work group who play a significant role in performance and influence. Given that broad generalization, the specific composition of the seminar can be approached in several ways:

1) Horizontal slice of the organization--this means that those who attend are all

from the same level. Attendance at the seminar by others not directly responsible will contribute relatively little if anything.

2) Diagonal slice of the organization--this means that people of varying ranks and departments come together to deal with the linkages, each from his or her own perspective. Thus, the head of one department may be in a seminar group with a head

from another department and a supervisor from still another operating area. In addition to line managers or personnel, staff members who service the line may also attend.

The rationale for the diagonal slice is that both primary and reference groups share

the same perspective regarding linkages that are being examined. Only by having all

concemed people think through and commit themselves to the linkages is it possible for the group to advocate shifting away from prevailing norms. An additional advantage of the diagonal slice is that many more perspectives can be brought into the discussion of linkages that exist.

3) Vertical slice of the organization--this consists of two levels-the immediate supervisor and those who report to him or her-and sometimes more than two levels. The vertical slice involves people of different ranks in the same reporting chain. Issues related to norms at the lower levels of the vertical slice often cannot be dealt with directly until the power and authority issues at higher levels have been resolved.

Implementation and continuous follow-up are necessary for long-term success of the linkages process. Often what might otherwise result in dramatic change fails to do so because of the widespread notion that one "major event" is conducted and everything is identified and "solved". It is important for continual review, analyses, and action planning as well as the consolidation of the new linkages and related behavior as part of the total effort to ensure that "fadeout" does not occur. This can be done by using existing organizational means and structures or in the event of dramatic changes impacting the organization, new seminars can be developed so that new processes and models for linkages can be assessed and revised.

HODEL DESCRIPTION

LIFE-CYCLE Change process progresses through necessary sequence of stages

GOAL-DIRECTED

(end-point, purpose)

Change based on cycle of

goal formulation, implementation,

evaluation, and modification

CONFRONT-DISCUSS Change based on conflicts between entities eventually producing synthesis

EVOLUTIONARY Change based on repetitive sequence of variation, selection, and retention events among entities

Figure 1.

Theories for Explaining Processes of Change in Organizations

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INPUTS

Economic

Social

St7ruec&tProce

DESIRED PERFORMANCE

Political Tasl<:s Roles

Regulatory ---- -1 ---------- Syste Responsibilities

Technological Relationships

OUTCOHES

Efficiency

Ecological

Performance

Leadership



I

Action

Enery

Diagnosis

Assessment

Task Alignment

Coordination Connnitment Competence

Effectiveness

Quality

Growth

Productivity

Innovation

Continuous

Improvement

ROLES RESPONSIBILITIES TASKS RELATIONSHIPS

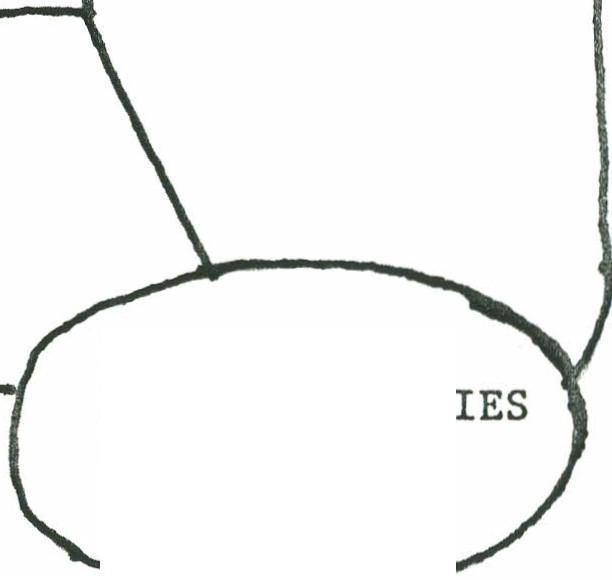
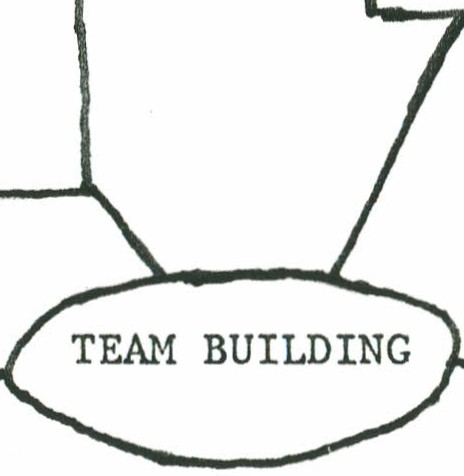
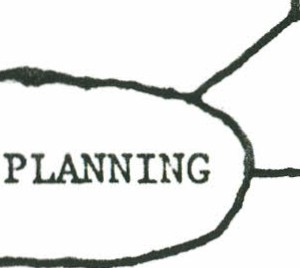
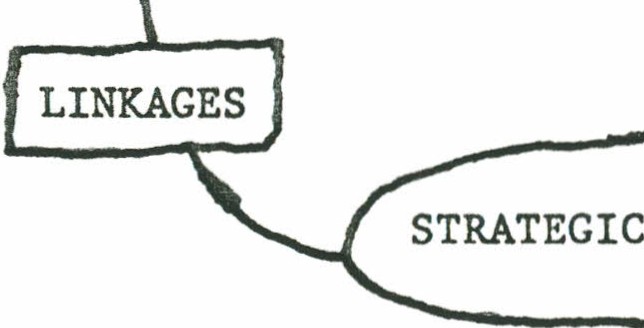
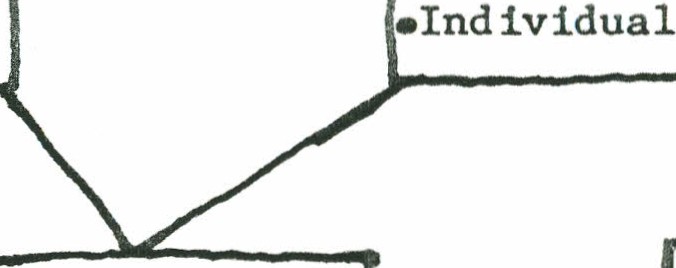
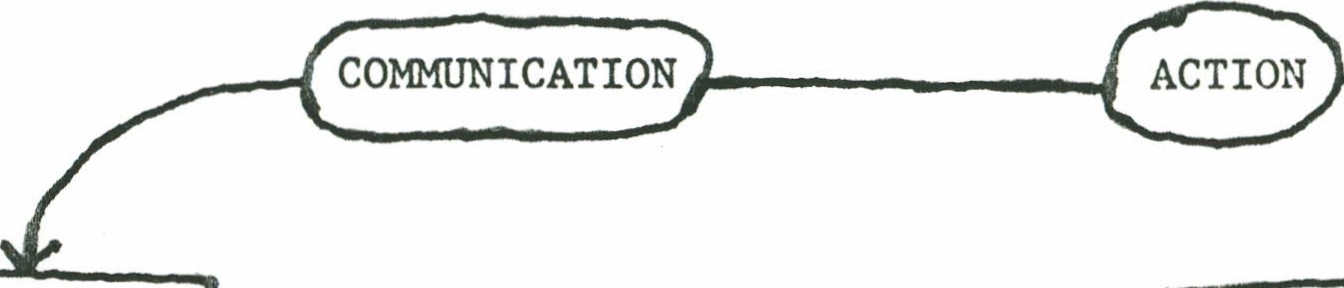


Figure 2.

An Organization Model

Changes in Doctrine

-Beyond Strategy to Purpose

Basic Assumption

•Senior mangement must change own priorities and ways of thinking

Action

Components

• Embed corporate ambition

•Instill organizational values

.Give meaning to work

-Beyond Structure to Processes

-Beyond Systems to People

•Structural top-down changes have not worked requiring more focus on horizontal processes rather than vertical structures

•Challenge today is to engage the knowledge and skills of each employee versus control systems of the past

•Frontline

Entrepreneurship

•Competence

Building

•Organizational Renewal eThe Individualized

Corporation

Figure 3.

The Changing Roles of General Management

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