

ELEMENTS OF CHANGE MANAGEMENT – Part 2

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ORGANIZATIONAL WORK

“If you want something to look spontaneous, organize it!” – Rolf Harris

Nothing in the old slapstick Three Stooges or Charlie Chaplin movies was ever off the cuff. It was all carefully planned and choreographed, in other words, carefully organized. And so it should be with attempting to change the culture of an organization.

There are three broad organizational paradigms that need to be considered when seeking to build a new culture of continuous improvement:

1. Organization Structure - The organization of the core business process as it seeks to deliver a product or service to its customers.
2. Individual Tasks - The organization of work as it is carried out by employees. They involve both data and material transfer, and each task entity “connects” with another.
3. Change process - The organization of a process to change the two elements above.

It is fair to say that items 1 and 2 are often not in alignment with each other and number 3 does not always exist as an integral part of a company’s DNA to help to create process alignment. Typically, most leaders and managers are consumed by the transactions of the business, the tasks of creating value for customers, the tasks of making sure that the product or service is delivered. Most of the time they are more deeply consumed with the tasks of correcting errors and problems, trying to temporarily fix the problems caused by a dysfunctional organization.

No improvement initiative can survive purely by focusing on the methods and tools that make the changes. They require a sound organizational process for effective implementation.

Work is typically structured in similar pods or clusters of like or similar work, typically called functions or departments. This means the transaction, the data or the product, has to navigate its way from one pod or cluster to another, and because each work step or value added task has multiple transactions or actions to deal with, transactions don’t flow through these in a predictable or smooth way. They are slowed down by bottlenecks and waste. These organization territories are commanded by leaders who defend their functional territory against attempts by others to influence and change these processes.

The work of deploying the appropriate elements of continuous improvement, whatever they are, must deal with the way the organization is structured to ensure that work flows smoothly across those functional pods and the politic that shapes the culture of those functional entities. Moving from a functionally structured organization to a process or flow structured organization requires the leadership to be more multi skilled, more generalist, and less specialist. Where specialist support functions exist,



like HR, maintenance, quality, etc., they are there to ensure that the functions dealing directly with the processes of adding value, are doing so at their optimum, at best quality, and correctly. Simply put, the organizational structures have to be shaped to enhance the flow of the core business work.

WIDER PERFORMANCE SKILLS

The Second paradigm is how the organization of each task is constructed, to enable the task an individual performs to be done fast and defect free. Too often organizations narrow down the performance task to the bare minimum leaving the worker or operator unable to deal with problems related to the task being performed. Companies reduce costs by eliminating the wider skills training required to make these positions fully competent, but the cost of errors and loss of productivity resulting from such lack of skill far exceeds the training cost.

We propose that every worker needs to not only know the operational skills, but must also have wider system knowledge, human relationship skills, problem solving skills and continuous improvement knowledge (TQM, JIT, 5S, etc). Yet, businesses typically expect people to work productively without these skills, and the result is that higher levels of supervision and management must do the reactive problem solving and improvement work that operators can do if they are trained. So we have an organizational paradigm of accepting incompetence, and it pervades the way we structure work. Traditional structures of supervision and control get reinforced and the result is cost and redundancy. Everyone has to learn to operate in two competing paradigms, create and sustain order, which implies not changing anything, keeping things constant, on the one hand, and on the other, create improvement, change things to make them better. For some this is a paradox, but in the lean environment these are two sides to the same coin, the one leads to the other, so the “organization” of the individual mind is required to blend these left and right brain activities in a way that does not create chaos. **One has to learn to integrate process improvement work with value added or transactional work.**

ORCHESTRATING CHANGE

The third paradigm we have mentioned is the management and organization of an initiative to change the culture, practice and behavior of the organization, its leaders and workers. This typically involves orchestrating numerous activities in a logical way to ensure a rapid and smooth transition from one set of work and leadership practices to another. This sort of initiative has several components. It has a vision for what the work of the organization will look like, a process of sharing and articulating that vision, a process to educate and provide new operational skills, a process of deploying those skills, monitoring the results of the work and sustaining that work through standard management practices. There is typically a plan, a timetable with milestones and targets, not only describing the results expected, but the processes that will be implemented to achieve those results.

In the previous article I referred to the work of Noel Tichy, where he postulates that all effective change management processes comprise technical, political and cultural elements, and that to be effective one has to address all of them. We have resolved to create a framework with elements that embrace the many observations made by Tichy and others. This framework serves to help us organize the way we deploy the many elements of a change initiative. There are many deeper levels of this framework that describe this work in more detail. This framework helps us plan and execute change and deploy methods to improve the core business processes of an enterprise. We suggest you study it, and if you are not comfortable with this matrix then push back, challenge it, seek an alternative, but make sure whatever you evolve has the integrity to build, execute, monitor and sustain a system that enhances your company's competitiveness.

	Plan	Execute	Validate	Sustain
Technical	Define the work to be done, both Strategic and Tactical	Execute the work, the improvement methods and approaches	Ensure the work is completed as planned, through process management	Deploy process standards to ensure results are preserved and continuously improved
Organizational	Define the capabilities, processes, and structures needed to do the work	Acquire and deploy the capability, processes, and structures needed to execute the work	Ensure the capabilities, processes, and structures are deployed as planned	Deploy systems to ensure the organizational capability is preserved and continuously improved
Cultural	Define the environment needed to enable the work	Cultivate the environment needed to enable the work	Ensure the environment is cultivated as planned	Deploy leadership that ensures the environment is preserved and continuously improved