

A COMPLETE PROGRAM FOR ORGANIZATIONAL SUCCESS*

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ABSTRACT: The theory of a complete program for creating and maintaining organizational success is described. The program is organized in terms of a five-stage process of planned change. The complete program is complex, as are the organizational problems it is designed to resolve. This approach is in marked contrast to "quick fixes" or single solutions to organizational problems.

Every few years, a new approach is offered to cure all organizational ills. But this is like the search for the Holy Grail: each new approach looks for the one single answer. For example, in the 1950s, management by objectives was heralded as the new solution to performance problems. In the 1960s, organization structure was believed to be the best solution. In the 1970s, corporate strategy was considered the new panacea. Now in the 1980s, the rage is corporate culture.

It is a shame that managers will have to learn the hard way—one more time—that a brand new culture cannot solve their performance problems either. Eventually, managers will drop the culture fad and move on to the next promised remedy, and the cycle will continue. All too often, single approaches are discarded because they have not been given a fair test. It is not the single approach of culture, strategy, or structure that is inherently ineffective. Rather, each is ineffective only if it is applied by itself—as a quick fix.

It is time to stop perpetuating the myth of simplicity. The system of organization invented by mankind generates complex problems that cannot be solved by simple, quick-fix solutions. The only alternative is to develop a truly integrated approach—a complete program for managing today's organization. However, any change program can be considered complete only if it specifies: (1) all controllable variables that affect organizational success, and (2) all action steps by which managers and

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consultants can adjust these controllable variables for organizational success.

Regarding the first ingredient, a complete program must integrate a variety of approaches—ranging from those that recognize the intrapsychic conflicts of individuals to those that act on the system-wide properties of organizations. This enables managers and consultants to control *all* leverage points in the organization—not just one or two as with any quick fix. Specifically, the full range of leverage points can be addressed by five carefully designed and integrated tracks: (1) the culture track, (2) the management skills track, (3) the team-building track, (4) the strategy-structure track, and (5) the reward system track.

Regarding the second ingredient, it is not enough to indicate *what* must be changed; a complete program must outline *how* change can be effectively managed in any organization. While a quick-fix approach blindly implements one single remedy after another, a complete program recognizes the intricate process of introducing and managing change, including the need for top management support, the importance of defining problems before solutions are chosen, and the necessity to be flexible while implementing change in a living, breathing organization. A five-stage process of planned change is proposed: (1) initiating the program, (2) diagnosing for problems, (3) scheduling the tracks, (4) implementing the tracks, and (5) evaluating the results.

This article describes the theory and process of a complete program for creating and maintaining organizational success, presented via the five stages of planned change. During these stages, the full range of leverage points will be discussed via the five tracks.

THE FIVE STAGES

Figure 1 shows the five stages of planned change in the form of a model. To be successful, all programs for improving organizations must devote sufficient time and efforts to complete each stage. Movement from one stage to the next, shown by the single arrows, should not take place until all the criteria for the earlier stages are satisfied. Otherwise, any glossed-over stages will come back to haunt the organization. Also, continual recycling through all five stages, without success, will eventually wear the organization down. It is desirable, therefore, to halt the entire change program until a particular stage can be conducted properly; or, if it seems that the necessary commitment and learning are unlikely to develop, the entire program should be terminated. There is simply no reason for an organization to go through a long and difficult process if success is not possible.

The five stages of planned change should be approached as a collaborative effort among managers, members, and external consultants; this is the best way I know to guarantee the success of the whole

THE FIVE STAGES OF PLANNED CHANGE

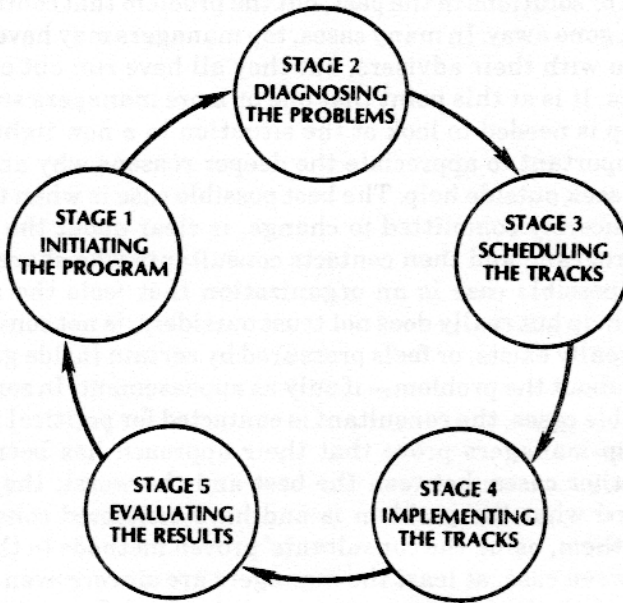


Figure 1

program. In many cases, however, top managers may prefer to manage the five stages on their own, just as they ordinarily make decisions and take action. Every top manager will have to make up his/her own mind on this issue. But I do caution managers not to conduct single-handedly those aspects of the program that are clearly beyond their skills and experiences. It is to be hoped that managers can recognize their limitations.

For example, it helps to have external consultants for collecting sensitive information about management and organizational problems, surfacing cultural norms, exposing outdated assumptions, confronting the organization's troublemakers, and helping managers hear honest feedback about their teams' functioning. Therefore, the diagnostic stage—and major portions of the culture, management skills, and team-building tracks—should be guided by consultants. Implementing the strategy-structure and the reward system tracks can be done primarily by the managers, although even here consultants can help foster a more participative approach than managers by themselves tend to utilize.

Initiating the Program

The program of five tracks can be initiated only after one or more members of the organization realize that something is very wrong and that they do not know what else to do. They may have tried a number of approaches or solutions in the past, but the problem that confronts them just has not gone away. In many cases, top managers may have discussed the problem with their advisers, but they all have run out of quick-fix alternatives. It is at this point that one or more managers suggest that outside help is needed to look at the situation in a new light.

It is important to appreciate the deeper reasons why an organization might seek outside help. The best possible case is when the organization is sincerely committed to change, is clear about the need for a complete program, and then contacts consultants who share this view. The worst possible case is an organization that feels the need to go outside for help but really does not trust outsiders, is not convinced that a problem really exists, or feels pressured by certain inside groups to do something about the problem—if only as appeasement. In some of these worst possible cases, the consultant is contacted for political reasons: to help the top managers prove that their approach has been right all along. In other cases, between the best and the worst, the managers have decided what the problem is and have contacted consultants to solve it for them, using the consultants' proven methods in this area. In this in-between case, at least the managers are sincere even if they are unfamiliar with the change process and the need for an independent diagnosis.

Generally, one or two key managers take the initiative to search for outside help. These key managers should be aware that a team of consultants not only has a broader range of talent than any one consultant but also provides the resources necessary to work with a large organization. Further, these key managers also play a pivotal role during the remaining stages of planned change. They are the chief advocates of the program and those who feel a special responsibility for its success. Implementation, for example, is helped immensely if these key managers also happen to be the senior executives of the firm. Having the power of the hierarchy behind the change program—from beginning to end—helps ensure a successful outcome.

The consultants who are contacted should be most interested to learn if the organization is ready for change. While managers can voice their commitment, the real test is subsequent action. At best, the consultants attempt to infer from several indicators the existence of true commitment. For example, do the managers openly acknowledge their role in the creation of the problem? Do they consider alternative perspectives and approaches? Do they seem receptive to a full diagnosis by the consultants? Do they realize the extensive and involving nature of the program? Or do they hope to find another quick fix? If the

consultants do not believe that sufficient commitment exists for a complete program of change or that it is likely to be generated, I recommend sharing this with the top management group as the primary reason for terminating the project. Nobody needs a failure experience.

If there appears to be sufficient basis for continuing, the consultants meet with more managers (including the top management group) to share objectives and expectations more widely. Much like the formation of an interpersonal relationship, the consultants and the organization see if there appears to be a fit. If this rapport does not develop, it may be due to an interpersonal quirk or to a true difference in style. Regardless, I have not heard or read of a successful case of change in which the client and consultant did not "hit it off." A difficult process of change must be rooted in a firm foundation of trust, liking, and mutual respect.

In most cases, a change program is initiated amidst a crisis or great uncertainty. Rarely do consultants and managers come into partnership under very stable and secure conditions. It seems that the organization has to be hurting before the call for a new approach will be sounded and accepted.

Diagnosing the Problems

This phase is guided very much by the consultants, who have to be sure that the diagnosis is based on their assessments, independent of the initial reasons that brought them into the organization. The consultants, with the aid of the managers, develop a plan to identify the organization's problems. Generally, this is accomplished by having the consultants interview members throughout the organization. The objective is to sample each level in the hierarchy—and each division and department—so that a representative view of the organization is obtainable. I always insist on interviewing all persons in the top management group simply because their views, and especially their commitment to change, are so critical to the program. If there are as many as 5,000 members in a division or organization, interviewing approximately 100 members should provide enough information to help define the organization's problems. For smaller organizations or divisions, 40 to 60 interviews should be sufficient.

Each one-on-one interview with a member begins with the consultant briefly reviewing the background and expectations of the meeting. The consultant outlines the specific questions that will be asked and indicates what will be done with the information collected. The consultant takes the time to explain what a change program is like and responds to any questions the interviewee may have. The consultant emphasizes that he or she cannot do an effective job without finding out what is really going on in the organization.

The consultant then should acknowledge the doubts the interviewee may be having about their meeting. For example, the consultant may suggest that it is quite natural for the interviewee to wonder if the consultant is working only for top management, to question whether the consultant can really learn about the unique problems of this organization, to worry about how the information will be reported to top management, to feel that nothing of real significance will come from the program—as has been the case, perhaps, with other change efforts. Often, by explicitly voicing what the interviewee must be feeling, the consultant gives the other confidence to reveal the organization's problems. Hopefully, the interviewee begins to feel, "If this person senses what I'm concerned about, he/she must have done this many times before and must know how to proceed. I'll give it a try."

Once all the interviews have been conducted, the consultants then prepare a report, which is presented first to the top managers. Although these top managers may have accepted the fact that their problems required outside help, they may not have sensed the extent and seriousness of these problems. Often surprise and shock follow the presentation of the report, and a lot more discussion is needed before the top managers can move forward. There may even be strong defensive reactions, which serve to deny or minimize what the consultants have reported. Some of this defensiveness is quite natural, since the managers are feeling somewhat guilty for being a part of the identified problems. If their egos are bruised, it will take some time for them to move past the defensive stage and on to the acceptance phase. This can take a few days or even a few months. The consultants can help by articulating these normal human reactions and by indicating how managers in other organizations have struggled with these same feelings. Sometimes these open discussions about hurt egos take the incredible burden off the top managers, who have come to see themselves as all knowing, all powerful, and, therefore, all responsible for anything and everything that happens to their organization. As their human nature is affirmed, it becomes easier to get on with addressing the organization's problems.

When the top managers accept the general diagnosis provided by the consultants, it then becomes desirable to share these findings with the entire membership. Naturally, it takes conviction for the top managers to be willing to share the diagnosis with others. But this willingness is critical for demonstrating commitment to the membership. The act of top managers acknowledging problems to themselves and to others, while painful, is an important event in the life of an organization.

The membership can be made aware of the consultants' diagnostic report either by memo, with the full report attached, or in employee meetings, in which everyone can hear and discuss the results together.

At times, it may not be feasible to reach everyone in person, particularly in a very large organization. However, active participation, including the opportunity to question and learn from the consultants directly, is generally the most effective approach. A written report, no matter how well conceived and written, is simply not as rich and engaging as a face-to-face conversation. While I recognize the real-world constraints of time and budget, I have to emphasize the importance of participation—the more the better. I have yet to encounter a situation in which too much participation was encouraged during a change effort.

Scheduling the Tracks

This stage involves: (1) selecting the techniques (methods for bringing about change) that will make up each of the five tracks—to address the specific problems identified during the diagnostic stage, and (2) scheduling the five tracks into a timed sequence of activity in order to promote effective learning and change. Once a plan for action is formalized in this stage, managers, members, and consultants will work together to implement it in the following stage.

What makes each application of a change program different is the particular techniques used in each of the five tracks. Just as the diagnosis varies, so does the choice of technique to address each identified problem. For example, in some cases the management skills track will include material on leadership styles, conflict-handling modes, and ways for minimizing defensive communication. In other cases in which the managers have already acquired these skills, management training moves directly to teaching methods for managing complex problems, including assumptional analysis. Clearly the consultants and the managers should be aware of the diversity of techniques that exist (or can be constructed) so that they can choose the ones that best fit the problems in their organization. (The bibliography contains several books that summarize the variety of techniques that have been used for planned change.)

The one thing that most distinguishes the change program from the quick fix is the integrated nature of the five tracks. These tracks and their host of techniques are not scheduled in a random order, nor is a shotgun approach used (in which all tracks are implemented haphazardly or indiscriminately). The guiding principles in organizing and sequencing the five tracks include the capacity of members and their organization to change, what change is easiest and best to accomplish early, and what change should be left to occur later.

The culture track is the ideal place to start the program, for several reasons. It is enlightening to discuss openly what previously was seldom written down or mentioned in any conversation. Members enjoy—even laugh at—the revelations that occur as the dysfunctional norms—the unwritten rules of the game—are brought to everyone's attention. It is

also much easier to blame norms than to blame oneself or other people. As long as members take responsibility for change, it does not really matter if using norms as a scapegoat takes some of the pressure off their egos. Of prime significance, however, is that without an initial culture change, it is unlikely that the other four tracks can be successful. In many cases, cultural norms pressure members to: (1) keep information to themselves, (2) distrust managers at the next highest level, (3) disbelieve that anything will really change, and (4) discourage any new behaviors without question. It would be most difficult to teach managers and members new skills if these attitudes and beliefs guided everyone's motivation to learn.

The culture track consists of a five-step process: (1) surfacing actual norms, (2) articulating what is needed for success today, (3) establishing new norms, (4) identifying culture-gaps, and (5) closing culture-gaps. For example, some actual work group norms that may surface are: Don't disagree with your boss; don't make waves; treat women as second-class citizens; don't share information with other groups; do as little as is necessary to get by. Often, work groups pressure each member to follow such dysfunctional norms out of habit—as in a culture rut. The culture track first exposes the old culture and then, if necessary, creates a new adaptive culture: Treat everyone with respect and as a potential source of valuable insight and expertise; initiate changes to improve performance; congratulate those who suggest new ideas and new ways of doing things; be helpful and supportive of the other groups in the organization.

After the culture track has begun and made some progress, the management skills track can start. In most cases, the managers have contributed substantially to the organization's problems, even if unintentionally. The managers usually have not kept up with the environment and its new types of problems. They often have not developed the skills—conceptual, analytical, administrative, social, and interpersonal—to manage complexity. Traditionally, managers pick the first available quick-fix solution before they even bother to define the root causes of the problem and then, to top it all off, they implement the quick-fix solution in a mechanistic manner; not surprisingly, the problem never gets resolved. However, once managers are receptive to change—through the culture track—they can be taught the full set of skills needed to conduct a five-step process for effective problem management: (1) sensing problems, (2) defining problems, (3) deriving solutions, (4) implementing solutions, and (5) evaluating outcomes. These steps, incidentally, parallel the five-stage process that governs the whole improvement effort.

The management skills track also offers a systematic method for uncovering the underlying assumptions that drive all decisions into action. If these assumptions have remained unstated and therefore untested, managers may have continually made the wrong decisions.

The deadliest assumption is referred to as *erroneous extrapolation*: what made the organization successful in the past will make it successful in the future. Specifically, managers may have assumed: No new competition will enter the industry; the economy will steadily improve; the government will continue to restrict foreign imports; the consumer will buy whatever the firm produces; employees will continue to accept the same working conditions. In short, all previous decisions may have been based more on fantasy and habit than on reality and choice. Outdated assumptions may have steered the organization into adopting the wrong strategies, structures, and reward systems as well. However, given a new culture that encourages trust and openness, members now will be able to analyze their previously unstated assumptions before any critical decisions are made. No longer will the membership be held back by its own faulty assumptions.

As the culture track and the management skills track are providing some early successes, the next effort lies in directly transferring these learnings into the mainstream of organizational life. Specifically, the team-building track does three things: (1) keeps the troublemakers in check so that they will not disrupt cooperative efforts, (2) brings the new cultural norms and management skills into the day-to-day activities of each work group, and (3) enables cooperative decisions to take place across group boundaries, as in multiple team efforts. In this way, all available expertise and information will come forth to manage the complex technical and business problems that arise within and between work groups. As the culture opens up everyone's minds as well as their hearts, work groups can examine, maybe for the first time, the particular barriers that have held them back in the past. Through various feedback sessions, old warring cliques become effective teams.

Eventually it becomes time for the membership to take on one of the most difficult problems facing any organization in a dynamic and complex environment: aligning its formally documented systems. One might think that the mission of the firm and its corresponding strategic choices should have been the first topics addressed. Why should the organization proceed with changes in culture, management skills, and team efforts before the new directions are formalized? Is it not logical to first know the directions before the rest of the system is put in place? Yes, that is logical. But there are other things operating in a complex organization besides logic. If we understand human nature and organizational culture, we recognize that it makes little sense to plan the future directions of the firm if members do not trust one another and will not share important information with one another, expose their tried-and-true assumptions, or commit to the new directions anyway because the culture will not allow it. If the prior tracks have not accomplished their purposes, the strategy-structure problem will be addressed through politics and vested interests, not through an open exchange of ideas and a cooperative effort to achieve organizational success.

The strategy-structure track is conducted in an eight-step process: (1) making strategic choices, (2) listing objectives to be achieved and tasks to be performed, (3) analyzing objective/task relationships, (4) calculating inefficiencies that stem from an out-of-date structure, (5) diagnosing structural problems, (6) designing a new structure, (7) implementing the new structure, and (8) evaluating the new structure. As a result of this process, the members remove a two-sided barrier to success: bureaucratic red tape that moves the organization in the wrong direction. In its place is a structure aligned with the firm's strategy.

Once the organization is moving in the right direction with the right structure and resources, the reward system track completes the change program by paying for performance. A seven-step process is used to design a performance-based reward system: (1) designing special task forces to study the problem, (2) reviewing the types of reward systems, (3) establishing several alternative reward systems, (4) debating the assumptions behind the different reward systems, (5) designing the new reward system, (6) implementing the new reward system, and (7) evaluating the new reward system. Only if the earlier tracks have accomplished their objectives, will members believe that the reward system is for real and that important rewards will vary with their performance. Such a reward system motivates excellence in contrast to mediocrity.

In order to help members improve their performance from one work cycle to the next, the reward system also considers how performance results and reward decisions are communicated to each member of the organization during face-to-face meetings with a superior. Two different types of meetings are established: (1) a performance review to provide information for evaluative purposes and (2) a counseling session to provide feedback for learning purposes. With a well-functioning reward system in place (the bottom line for the membership), all improvements derived from the change program will be ingrained in the everyday life of the organization.

Implementing the Tracks

It is one thing to schedule the five tracks, but it is quite another to adjust and modify the schedule as it is implemented. Needless to say, the plan *never* takes place exactly as intended. There are always surprises. Human nature and human systems, being what they are, do not lend themselves to a predictable path. Besides, if people feel they are being programmed in any way, it is not unlike them to purposely do something illogical, irrational, or unexpected, just to show how free and independent they really are. Implementing the five tracks is just another example of the dynamic and complex world in which we live.

The key issue during implementation, therefore, is flexibility. It is important not to get too locked into any plan; this makes it very difficult to back off and change to a new one. The schedule of five tracks is helpful

as a starting point, since without it there would be confusion and misguided efforts. As the schedule is implemented, however, the consultants must look for cues, take suggestions, and, in short, adapt.

Special requests are made for counseling sessions, feedback sessions for staff meetings, additional culture sessions, more management skills training, and so forth. In each case, the consultants and the managers must consider the request and respond according to their objectives and their sense of what will work. Sometimes requests are turned down, but the reasons are always presented and discussed. At other times, requests are acted upon—but in a fashion different from that first suggested. Often, it is the consultants themselves who initiate additional activity, adjusting to what they perceive is needed—to nudge this person or that group or to support any effort that turned out to be more difficult than first thought.

A shared expectation, which should develop as the program is initiated, is that the consultants have the freedom to schedule whatever activities are necessary to move the change effort forward. I have come across a number of organizations that at first failed to appreciate the importance of this option. I remember a few cases in which the managers expected the consultants to know exactly what activities would take place and when. However, since the needs and demands of the members are constantly changing, frequent adjustment is essential to any improvement effort. Today's organization also needs the same approach relative to the needs and demands of its external environment. The former is merely a microcosm of the latter.

The most enjoyable part of the implementation stage is seeing changes and improvements take hold. Initially, everyone is a little leery of what to expect and unsure of whether the organization has the ability to change. As early successes are won, however, confidence develops, which inspires an even greater effort at improvement. This is not to suggest that the road is smooth and without obstacles; on a week-by-week basis, some things get a lot worse before they get better. In some cases, the organization expects the change to develop quickly and with little pain, regardless of what the managers or consultants have stated. When an event takes place that seems to reinforce the old ways or attitudes of the past, it is easy to be discouraged and feel that nothing has changed. If, instead of examining week-by-week fluctuations, one looks at month-by-month trends, the process shows a more definite pattern of improvement.

These fluctuations in perceived accomplishments and moods illustrate the importance of setting realistic expectations in the beginning and making sure that either a strong desire or an impatience for change does not raise member expectations to unattainable levels. Disappointment and frustration result when these expectations are out of line with reality, which subsequently affects both the individual's and the organization's confidence to continue. The managers and consultants have to nurture expectations very carefully during implementation.

After a number of months go by, it becomes more and more apparent that the membership has internalized the overt behaviors that have been observed. Each person does not have to apply new skills and enact new cultural norms in a conscious and deliberate manner; rather, the new ways are enacted quite automatically. The new skills and behaviors become more natural and easier. At a certain point (and this is very difficult to specify in advance), the "hump" is crossed and the old gives way to the new. The best way I can describe this transition is to say that the members and the managers could not return to the old ways even if they tried because the new ways are so obviously better and more useful for their personal satisfaction and for accomplishing the organization's mission. Strangely, it is even hard for these members to recall how different things were just six months or a year ago. The past is really put aside in their behaviors, attitudes, and memories.

The implementation stage is complete when the consultants and managers both believe the organization can manage its problems on its own. During the last few months of implementation, the consultants become less involved in scheduling and implementing activities; the managers and the members now decide on their own what team building or skills training is needed and then proceed to fill the gap—sometimes with outside help, sometimes not. The organization thus moves into "independence." The membership has solved, and can continue to solve, the problems for which the program was initiated in the beginning.

One difficult question is always asked: "How long will the whole change program take?" And it is asked repeatedly, not just once. My response is: "I can't say exactly; I can only suggest some rough guidelines from my prior experience." These guidelines consider the size and age of the organization, the complexity of the problems that were uncovered, the severity of the problems, the time available for conducting the five tracks, and the desire on the part of both managers and all members to learn and change. Since the organization cannot shut down its operations just to engage in a change program, the five tracks have to be conducted as other work gets done—even during crises and peak seasons.

In general, one can expect most change programs to take anywhere from six months to five years. Less than six months might work for a small division, in which the formally documented systems need only a fine tuning. However, a program taking more than five years might be necessary for a very large, old organization involving major breaks from the past in every way. If the program were to take more than ten years, I would assume that there was insufficient commitment over this time period, which prevented the momentum for change to prevail.

Evaluating the Results

Usually this fifth and last stage of the program receives the least time and attention. My own experience is that the program "concludes"

during the last formal efforts at implementation, as members take more and more responsibility for managing their problems. At this time, the consultants are seen less frequently on site and gradually disappear altogether. I think the major reason for concluding before the final evaluation stage is that most members, including top management, are fairly well convinced of the outcomes without needing a formal assessment. The members experience the effectiveness of their decision making and action taking in all work units. They feel very good about themselves, their organization, and their approach to problems.

What is the need, then, for a formal assessment beyond member perceptions and impressions? Formal assessments tend to confirm these informal evaluations and systematize the results for the whole organization. Perhaps the more vocal members are not a fair representation of the entire membership. It may be that the quieter members are more dissatisfied with the outcomes of the program than are their more vocal counterparts. Alternatively, it could be that the more vocal individuals are more negative about the change effort and the silent majority is very pleased. It is therefore important that a representative assessment be conducted to ensure a balanced evaluation.

Another reason for a systematic evaluation is to keep the idea and purpose of diagnosis alive and well in the organization. In fact, one could think of evaluation as a second problem diagnosis. If the organization has been successful in solving its problems, then conducting another round of interviews across all levels and departments should result in a very different assessment. If the program has been successful and all members have internalized their learnings (as well as realigned the formally documented systems), the interviews should reveal no new problems. Any problems raised during the second round of interviews would be qualified with: "But, of course, we are already working on that problem and expect to solve it."

Evaluators, however, have been known to emphasize "bottom-line" results: return on investment, earnings per share, profit, sales, number of clients served, market share, budget increases, number of patients and new products, new contracts and orders, productivity gains, and many other performance measures. From the point of view of any stakeholder—those who have a stake in the focal organization, such as consumers, stockholders, suppliers, federal agencies, and the community—one usually can suggest some "hard" outcome measures. Making a before-and-after comparison on any of these measures (before and after the change program), should provide a solid basis for assessing the impact of the program. If the change effort were successful, the differences in these measures should be evident—or so the argument goes.

While these hard, bottom-line measures certainly can be convincing, one has to recognize their limitations. Improvements in the quality of decisions and actions, for instance, do not translate to one-for-one

increments in performance and morale. Normally, a whole series of decisions and actions is combined in complicated ways before their effects are noticed.

One should also not forget the time lag between decisions and actions on the one hand and performance on the other. Some of the bottom-line measures would not be affected until months or years after a key decision has been made. For instance, improved decision making that results in new approaches to product development will not be felt in the organization's setting for years. If the before-and-after comparisons are made right after the change program has concluded, one cannot expect outside stakeholders to take note of any observable differences in outcomes. Ironically, if such before-and-after comparisons were to suggest significant improvements (or declines), they probably would be spurious or artifactual. Only if the bottom-line measurements are made over a period in which true effects can be expected can one take the results of such an evaluation seriously.

If the world functioned like a simple machine, then the environment would be stable, predictable, certain, and easily measurable; the impact of the change effort on performance measures could be evaluated precisely and accurately. If, however, the world functions more like a swirling flow of interconnected living beings, then outside forces can affect the organization at any time in dramatic and unpredictable ways. Here it is most precarious to try to specify the exact effects of a change program on various performance measures—especially since these vary according to each and every stakeholder. While the change effort was underway, a thousand other forces and events were having impact, any one of which could add to or subtract from the organization's own internal efforts. Boldly put, a single event produced by a single stakeholder can completely nullify the quality of decisions and actions the organization has learned to enact.

Accepting the interconnected, *living* view of organizational life and realizing the difficult measurement problems this view poses should not prevent any evaluation from being conducted. First, the diagnosis can be redone to see how well the identified problems were solved. Second, before-and-after surveys may help test the resolution of problems in one or more tracks. For example, a survey instrument that was used to pinpoint various culture-gaps (the difference between actual versus desired cultural norms) can be administered again to see what improvements in culture have occurred. Third, a number of morale surveys and attitude measures can be used to test the general spirit and satisfaction of the membership. While these evaluations are largely internal audits, they are helpful. If these diagnostic efforts and surveys reveal that significant problems still remain, it is unlikely that the "true" performance measures will signify success. But if these internal assessments are positive, it suggests that successful performance *may* follow if all other environmental events favor the organization. This is

not a simple machine approach and therefore is not a perfect methodology, but it is a useful approximation for evaluating the success of a change program.

CONCLUSION

The complete program for revitalizing organizations is certainly complex, but so are the problems that this program is designed to resolve. Quick fixes cannot solve complex problems; it is time that both managers and consultants accepted this fact of organizational life. Any serious improvement effort must be able to affect every controllable variable in the organization, not just one or two. At the same time, if the whole program is not initiated properly with top management support, and if the problems of the organization are neither diagnosed correctly nor accepted by top management, the complete program cannot provide its potential benefits. Moreover, the program must be implemented in an integrated manner, with flexibility and adaptability. Attempting to quick fix any complete program would do the practice of management—and any organization—a great disservice.

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