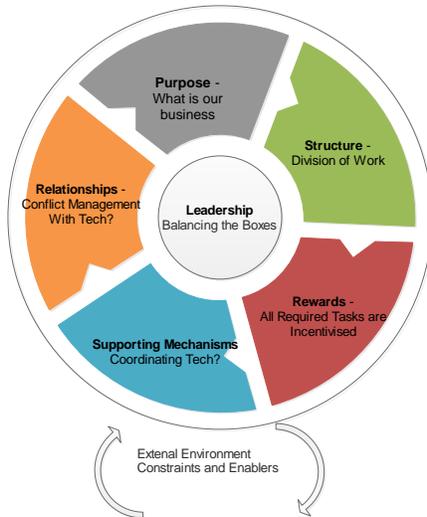


Organizational Change – Diagnostic Models, Cont'd

Weisbord's Six-box Model



Any good diagnostic model will help the assessor to build a mental picture of the organization and point to obvious areas of misalignment. They will also take into consideration external influences where there is little leadership can do but nonetheless needs to be aware. Weisbord suggested a Six Box Model for organizational diagnosis, consisting of key boxes: purpose, structure, relationships, rewards, leadership, and helpful mechanism ¹. The main advantage of the Six-Box Model is that it is a quick and simple tool to get a 1,000 ft picture of things from an internal perspective and yet recognize the potential of external influences. While there is no one perfect model Weisbord's Six-box Model is used by approximately 25% of organizations at some point ².

This “lesson” on another diagnostic model appropriate for pre-organizational change diagnostics

Purpose

The mission statement, the fundamental purpose of the enterprise, should be evaluated via two primary factors.

Goal Definition: Are the employees clear about the organization’s mission?

Figure 1 - Weisbord Six Box Model

Goal Agreement: Employee support of the organization’s mission in terms of attitudes and behaviors.

Key Questions:

1. Is the mission and vision clear?
2. How much variance between what the company says it does and what it actually does?
3. How well are the mission and vision statements used to establish goals?
4. Are the goals clearly understood by the employees?
5. To what extent or how well aligned is understanding the goals?
6. To what extent do employees participate in goal setting?
7. To what extent is commitment an buy-in on the goals?
8. How well does employee competency and capabilities fit the goals?

¹ Weisbord, Marvin R. (1976) “Organizational Diagnosis: Six Places to Look for Trouble with or without a Theory,” *Group & Organization Studies*. 1:4. pgs 430-447

² Jones, B., M. Brazzel, *The NTL Handbook of Organization Development and Change: Principles, Practices, and Perspectives* (San Francisco, California, Pfeiffer, 2006)

Structure

The organizational structure outlines how certain activities (which should be mission critical) are directed in order to achieve the goals of an organization. These activities can include rules, roles, and responsibilities. The organizational structure also determines how information flows between levels and across departments. For example, in a centralized structure, decisions flow from the top down, while in a decentralized structure, the decisions are made at various levels. Organizational structure can be functional, matrix, divisional, or different networks of teams. It is important to not only know the structure but to what extent is it followed.

Key Questions:

1. Does the structure fit the purpose?
 - a. Is there a better organizational structure/design more suited to our purpose?
2. Is communication negatively impacted by the structure?
3. Do the differences between the formal and informal structures significantly influence the difference between what is said to be done and what is actually done?
4. Is the level of accountability sufficient in both the formal and informal structures?

Relationships

Interactions between employees, as well as employees' attitudes toward technology, are assessed. Three types of connections: between employees, between departments that perform different tasks, and between employees and their job requirements. When Weisbord first created the Six-Box organizational diagnostic tool the sophistication of technology used for conflict (not physical conflict) resolution was limited. Now, there are tools like ERP, CRM, centralized project management, etc. that are used. Here it is necessary to assess the relationship of employees to the tech used, not the tech itself. That is under supporting mechanisms.

Key Questions:

1. Does team development play an important role in achieving goals?
2. How well do people communicate and relate to one another?
 - a. Departments and units?
3. What is the level of collaboration?
4. Are team roles clearly defined and assigned?
5. How much job/role/task related conflict is there?
 - a. Healthy or not?

Supporting Mechanisms

Organizations use a myriad of technologies to carry out their day-to-day processes as well as strategic functions. This assessment looks at all of them from a coordinating and efficacy perspective. There are some good tools available, e.g. Rummier-Brache diagrams (Swim Lane diagrams) from an internal perspective and PERT Analysis to assess external influences.

Key Questions:

1. Are there planning, budgeting, and controlling systems in place?
 - a. If so, are they adequately monitored?
2. What mechanism, if any, is used to measure and evaluate performance?
3. Is the communication across platforms sufficient and effective?
4. Is the training process aligned with employee skill and performance expectations?

Rewards

Contrary to popular belief not everyone is motivated by cash. The reward system must be aligned with stated goals but also the employees' motivating factors. Incentives should be both formal and informal.

Key Questions:

1. Do rewards support the organization's mission, vision, and goals?
2. How timely are rewards?
3. What actions and results really get rewarded?
4. Are rewarded actions and results fully aligned with goals?
5. What triggers employee punishment?
6. Can employees select rewards, e.g. cash or time off?
7. Are rewards distributed equitably?
8. Are there regular evaluations of individual psychological contracts?

Leadership

Leadership is mostly about balancing the myriad of formal and informal demands on them. In this box the other boxes are evaluated as to their fit and support with each other in light of leadership's ability to balance each box's demands. It is important to understand that in this box, perhaps more than the others, there are outside influences or mitigators that impact other boxes, such as regulation, media, and shareholders. In organizational change, leadership is paramount.

Key Questions

1. How are leaders, across the organizational spectrum, chosen?
2. Do leaders reflect the organization's purpose in organizational goals?
 - a. In departmental goals?
 - b. Team goals?
3. Is the primary leadership style appropriate to the other box's direction?
4. Is there a regular check against purpose drift or validity?
5. Is there an appropriate balance between leading and managing for each level of leader?
6. Do leaders practice ethical leadership and are they perceived to be aligned with stated organizational values?