Developing personal responsibility and leadership traits in all your employees: part 2 – optimally shaping and harmonizing focus, will and capability

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Abstract
Proposes that to optimize enterprise performance and longevity organizations must develop and sustain appropriate traits of personal responsibility and leadership in all employees. Contends that this is feasible and describes how it can be accomplished. Part 1 of this paper dealt with shaping and harmonizing the high-performance drivers and appeared in *Management Decision*, Vol. 40 No. 8. Part 2 now deals with optimally shaping and harmonizing focus, will and capability.

Introduction

Given the pace of change and the contextual complexity in which organizations operate in the new millennium, how then can an enterprise optimize performance and longevity? We believe that a critical element involves ensuring that individuals at all levels of the organization exhibit appropriate levels of responsibility and leadership – in other words, every person exhibiting leadership, not just "the leaders". It is our contention that this is feasible and the objective of this paper is to indicate how it can be accomplished.

In part 1 a theoretical foundation for development and maintenance of personal responsibility and leadership throughout an organization was constructed. We also showed how this could be designed and monitored using a simple performance system consisting of the three fields focus, will and capability. We also examined important factors that shape the state of the three fields, and explored various aspects of serious endemic shortcomings that we perceive in typical efforts to shape these fields

In part 2 we set out criteria and initiatives that may be undertaken in shaping individual fields to promote optimal overall performance, including fostering personal responsibility and leadership traits, and overcoming the most serious endemic shortcomings discussed in part 1. We then detail our approach to developing all three performance fields systemically and simultaneously.

Fundamentals for development of sound focus, will and capability fields

In this section we outline some explicit initiatives that an organization can

undertake in order to influence the three performance fields so that "ideal" behaviours (and therefore performance) will in principle be developed and maintained. These initiatives will have the benefit of addressing the endemic shortcomings we discussed in part 1 of this paper.

Each field is treated individually; however we have attempted to indicate how activities initiated to shape one field will influence one or more other fields. The fields are treated in the order focus, capability and will because actions can be initiated fairly readily for focus and capability that are the basis for any successful attempt to influence will.

Focus

As explained in part 1, focus represents a clear definition and understanding of the performance proposed; focus is associated with questions such as what …?; how …?; who …?; where …?; when …?; why …? In our opinion, the most critical aspect of focus is the organization's "vision". It is also the foundation for the sense of personal responsibility that we wish to develop; for example we agree with the great Irish poet William Butler Yeats that "Responsibility begins in dreams" (Kanter, 1989, p. 198).

It is our impression that in general organizations have learned to do a good job of communicating vision, values and strategy, and of involving team members and individuals in helping to formulate local plans. We believe that this is largely as a result of improvements in management development. Unfortunately the corollary to having more knowledgeable managers is the certitude among them that they know all there is to know, and "communicating" has become synonymous with "announcing". Apart from those very few "heroic" leaders like Martin Luther King Jr, who can energize the troops with a fiery speech (Kouzes and Posner, 1995, pp. 125-9), telling people "how it ought to be" may lead to compliance and conformity, but very seldom to the desired

commitment. Ulrich (1997, p. 192) describes the typical situation: "Strategic plans are created, but implementation fails to follow. Vision or mission statements are drafted, published, and lauded in executive speeches, but they do not change either organizational practices or individual behaviours."

Vision makes its strongest contribution to the focus field when it results from a sharing of the individual yearnings of all employees, not when it is treated as a target to be handed down on a tablet from on high. This is consistent with the new science perspective articulated by Wheatley (1992, p. 54): "What if we saw a field of vision that needed to permeate organizational space, rather than viewing vision as a linear destination?". We particularly like Senge's (1990, p. 212) metaphor of organizational vision as a hologram. When a hologram is divided into pieces, each piece no matter how small conveys the whole image intact. When individuals in an organization share the vision (as part of the local focus), each person sees the whole organization's aspiration as well as their own personal dreams contained within it.

In spite of a wealth of information on how to involve the whole organization in vision development, articulation, and sustenance (Senge, 1990; Senge *et al.*, 1994, 1999), in our experience such an approach is still only infrequently adopted. According to Kouzes and Posner (1995, p. 124): "Inspiring a shared vision is the least frequently applied of the five fundamental practices of exemplary leadership".

We agree with Kouzes and Posner (1995, p. 129) that "The first task in enlisting others (in discovering a common purpose) is to identify our constituents and find our what their common aspirations are". Senge (1990, pp. 205-32) has provided an excellent overview of shared vision and of many critical aspects of its achievement. He has since followed with voluminous practical detail (Senge *et al.*, 1994, 1999). Parker (1990) provides a lengthy and very useful case study devoted to her experience in creating a shared organizational vision.

We feel it serves little purpose to regurgitate here the wisdom and practical experience of the above authors. Rather we posit that an organization must firmly adopt an approach that will truly eventuate in both a shared vision and the means to keep it evergreen. In the final section of this paper we describe our systemic approach to developing shared vision; we delay this description until that point because the approach also serves to address development of appropriate aspects of will and capability.

Capability

One of the aspects of organizational life that we believe has become undervalued, or even lost, in the rush to merge, downsize, re-engineer etc. for competitive advantage, is an appreciation of the physiological needs of individual employees. This is catastrophic in our view since we believe the concept of self-actualization pioneered by Goldstein and polished by Maslow (Mahesh, 1993, p. 35) is critical to the development of personal responsibility and leadership traits in all employees.

Maslow (1943) postulated that human beings have an innate need to satisfy certain needs, and that these needs form a hierarchy. The lowest level he termed the physiological e.g. food, water. Once the physiological needs are fulfilled, humans look to satisfy what Maslow called their safety needs e.g. law, stability. When the two lowest needs are largely gratified, there emerges the need for belongingness e.g. love, community. According to Maslow, only when the three lower needs are satisfied will an individual seek esteem. He divided this class of needs into two sub-classes. The first involves the need for self-evaluation e.g. self-esteem, confidence; the second involves the views of others e.g. reputation, prestige. Maslow is quoted by Mahesh (1993, p. 49) as seeing a further less well formulated stage:

> Even if all these [lower] needs are satisfied, we may still often (if not always) expect that a new discontent and restlessness will soon develop, unless the individual is doing what he, individually, is fitted for.

And:

> What a man *can* be, he *must* be.

Mahesh likens this yearning for self-actualization to the Indian concept of Sahaja, meaning "natural, easy flow".

Mahesh draws a useful distinction between needs that are under the control of others (physiological, safety, belongingness, recognition) and needs that can be satisfied by the individual him/herself (self-esteem, self-actualization). He terms these "needs in others' domain" and "needs in one's own domain" respectively. This classification allows us to see the place for intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in shaping the three performance fields. We include extrinsic motivation as an element of capability development that has an impact on will, whereas intrinsic motivation is an element in shaping will directly. It must be borne in mind that research has shown that the level reached in Maslow's hierarchy is directly correlated with the quality of performance to be anticipated from an individual (*Fortune*,

1997). It is therefore extremely important that the capability needs in others' domain are well satisfied before attempting to introduce will-related activities aimed at self-actualization.

Mahesh re-emphasises Maslow's notion of "threshold limits" (Mahesh, 1993, p.70). These limits have practical implications for Capability shaping. Mahesh echoes Maslow's point that individuals should set their targets for satisfying their needs in other's domain at the boundary between "justifiable appetite" and "greedy desire". The energy used in seeking to satisfy greed will sap an individual's capability to satisfy needs in one's own domain. This line of thinking has serious implications for capability schemes involving incentives; the extravagant levels of CEO remuneration often reported also clearly set the wrong example. A recent book (Maslow *et al.*, 1998) sets out Maslow's thoughts on the hierarchy of needs with specific reference to business and the art of management.

It should not be too hard for an organization to establish the current satisfaction level of its employees with regard to their needs in others' domain, and also the prevalent threshold limits. For example, organizational health surveys are commonly carried out, albeit often asking the wrong questions.

In the final section of this paper we describe our systemic approach to shaping capability in an evergreen way. We delay this description until that point because the approach also serves to address development of appropriate aspects of will and focus.

Will

The initiatives discussed above for focus and capability are in themselves very powerful in shaping the will field by pulling it into being rather than mandating a certain state of will. In this subsection we concentrate on activities that shape will and are associated with intrinsic motivation and needs in one's own domain.

It is critical that organizations accept that individual employees indeed do have individual characteristics; what satisfies one person's needs in their own domain may not satisfy the next person. It is possible to roughly categorize individuals as members of groups with certain dominant characteristics. For example, the Myers-Briggs personality inventory instrument is popular in this regard. Nash's (1999) book also provides excellent reviews of the field together with self-assessment instruments. Although these assessments of personality are not uncommon, they are typically used to

sensitize individuals to the needs of others as a means for them to recognize and smooth interpersonal relations. For example this is the purpose of Nash's (1999) book. Not that this is wrong, but rather it is wasteful of critical will-related information. Individuals need to explore why it is that they themselves do what they do.

In this regard, organizations should consider coupling personality assessment with the principles of Gestalt. Gestalt is a well-founded discipline (for example see Nevis, 1987) with a practice that may readily be brought to bear if organizational conditions support it.

Fundamental to the Gestalt approach to process consulting are two principles:

1 It is critical that the practitioner begin with Figure or Gestalt formation; this a process for seeing the whole first, followed by differentiation into its parts.
2 There must be a realisation that people strive for completeness of action/perception and are only satisfied when they achieve it.

   Application of these principles to various aspects of human behaviour leads to a process conception of good functioning that emphasizes the value of awareness of self and other in the present moment. Particular attention is given to finding out what is needed to adapt to the changing situation as individuals relate to each other and their environment (Nevis, 1987, p. 18).

Gestalt practitioners are careful to fully address the implications of the negative aspects of the second principle, whereby individuals and organizations are inclined to freeze on knowledge and avoid evidence that tends to disprove their beliefs (Smith and Saint-Onge, 1996). Kruglanski and Webster (1996) deal at length with this phenomenon that they term "cognitive closure". Pfeffer and Sutton (2000, p. 88) cite this as one of the major causes of the paradox that organizations know how to solve most problems but will not take the necessary action.

Gestalt process consultation differs from most other modes of facilitation in that to help their clients they use themselves in a highly involved way. For example, they both educate the client in the Gestalt approach and skills, and actually provide a presence that would otherwise be lacking i.e. they "take a stand".

New books based on the Gestalt approach to organizational needs continue to appear (Clarkson, 2000; Carroll and Walton, 1997; Mackewan, 1997). As these texts make clear, Gestalt approaches have much to offer in addressing self-actualization, as well as

quality of life issues. Senge's notion of Personal Mastery (Senge, 1990, pp. 139-73) is also a useful framework.

In the next section of this paper we describe our systemic approach to shaping will in an evergreen way. We delay this description until that point because the approach also serves to address development of appropriate aspects of focus and capability.

A systemic approach to shaping all three fields simultaneously

General discussion

Organizations run on meetings and for good reason. This is by and large how human beings like to work and interact – people are social animals. These meetings do not need to be face-to-face, but this is typically the case, because people like it that way. Such meetings provide a natural systemic way to shape focus, will and capability if they are run appropriately, fostering feelings of purposefulness and competence, and energizing individuals to act towards the organisation's vision. The outcome of this holistic approach is that members feel a valued part of the organisation, connected internally with their own needs and externally to the needs of others.

Note that we are not advocating more meetings, but rather a change in the tone. At most meetings attendees talk for hours without "meeting" each other at all. In many instances the last thing people want is to meet and be forced to reveal their anxieties, concerns, and lack of knowledge or understanding. Indeed meetings are often held to protect people's positions and interests rather than to increase understanding. This lack of comprehension and disclosure arises because of the nature and quality of the interactions between individuals and groups.

Organizations do attempt to overcome barriers and enhance interpersonal and communication skills. Unfortunately these skills are often developed via short courses with titles such as "Effective Meetings" or "Chairing Meetings". Here people learn the techniques and rituals of meetings, but they do not necessarily become more adept at understanding, or opening up to one another. Indeed, in our experience the converse is the norm. Recognising the benefits of developing good interpersonal relationships is of course welcome, but unless linked to a more holistic approach such techniques are often used to manipulate situations/others. A more promising approach to enhancing the quality

of the communications is to modify the words that individuals use in representing their feelings and attitudes (Kegan and Lahey, 2000). Such a change would lead to people "meeting at their boundary" (Nevis, 1987, p. 178).
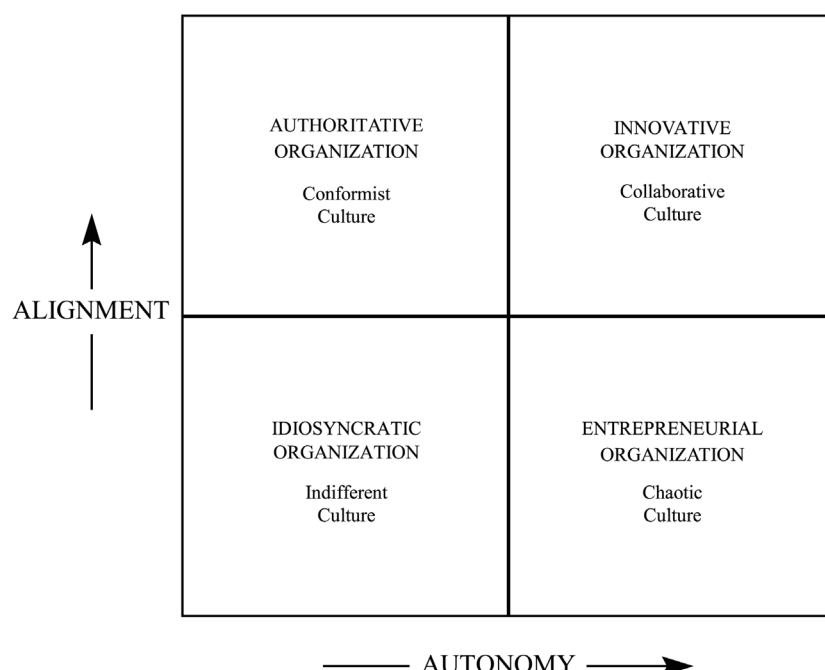
When people "meet at their boundary" they are aware of their own needs and are willing to articulate them to others, giving freedom to their passions, hopes, desires and fears, moving away from the façade of rationality (as discussed earlier), and becoming attentive to the psychic needs of others. Every individual has their own boundary; "... a psychological marker that that creates a space within which people can take up their roles with some degree of certainty knowing who they are and what they are accountable for" (Goldstein, 1992, p. 21). This is consistent with our intention, stated in parts 1 and 2 of this paper, to position an organization and its people in the innovative/collaborative quadrant of Figure 1.

In an organisational setting, in general individuals create their own boundaries based on several factors, primarily what needs they want met from organisational life (as discussed earlier). Clearly the organisational culture is a key influence. For example, if an organisational culture is very hierarchical allowing little room for development or creativity, then an individual will create a boundary based on the needs that can be met in this setting, and the relationships she/he can develop with others around them – in other words adopting a fairly bureaucratic and rigid attitude. If the situation changes, an individual makes a choice regarding where to reset the boundaries within the new context. In the absence of boundaries, individuals internalize the business chaos around them, feeling they are being made responsible for activities and outcomes beyond their control, and become even more rigid and resistant to openness.

People make real contact with one another in organisational life when they are self-aware of their own boundaries, the limitations they set on those boundaries, and are attentive to the boundaries of others. It is the awareness and attentiveness that is the essence of good contact. A meeting with the right tone is one where people make this real contact with each other, and where individuals and groups demonstrate the qualities that Zinker (1998, p. 114) attributes to the happy couple/family:
- Hear each other.
- Own their feelings and ideas.
- Exchange ideas so that a good fit is achieved.

Figure 1

The figure shows a 2×2 matrix with ALIGNMENT on the vertical axis (pointing up) and AUTONOMY on the horizontal axis (pointing right). The four quadrants are:

- Top-left: AUTHORITATIVE ORGANIZATION — Conformist Culture
- Top-right: INNOVATIVE ORGANIZATION — Collaborative Culture
- Bottom-left: IDIOSYNCRATIC ORGANIZATION — Indifferent Culture
- Bottom-right: ENTREPRENEURIAL ORGANIZATION — Chaotic Culture

- Ask each other questions, rather than making assumptions.
- Disagree and accept differences without fear.
- Accommodate each other.
- Fight for what feels "right" and "good" for each other.
- Start, develop, and finish a discussion or event and then let it go.
- Share pains, curiosities, regrets, resentments, tenderness – a variety of needs and wants.
- Learn to accept a "yes" gratefully and a "no" graciously without holding onto resentment.
- Move from one experience to another without getting stuck.
- Let go of wanting something that is hopelessly unavailable.
- Laugh at themselves.
- Influence each other.
- Support each other's interest and projects.
- Show pride and compassion for each other's accomplishments and setbacks.
- Respect each other's privacy and, at the same time, intrude when another withdraws in pain.
- "Mind each other's business" when it comes to important matters.
- Tolerate strange and novel ideas from each other and dream together.

The fruits of such encounters, whether in group meetings or one-to-one, are clearly rich and varied. These behaviours are in marked contrast to the traditional lack of understanding and sensitivity for the reality of others' existence prevalent in most organizations. Listed below are the different ways that families interrupt or block communication according to Zinker (1998, pp. 119-24); in an organisational setting similar behaviours are played out:

- *Desensitization* – people look at each other with little concentration, scan each other's language superficially or do not bother listening at all, avoid touching each other or block "full entry", feel bored, uninvolved.
- *Projection* – make assumptions about each other, guess what the other is feeling or thinking without asking questions to check if the assumption is right, little lively debate.
- *Introjection* – the solution is forced onto others without investment of energy in fully "chewing over", no investment in getting everyone on board.
- *Retroflection* – people turn inwards and do to themselves what they want and need from others, everyone feels isolated and at same time safe in their inner struggle, no help is asked for or given.
- *Deflection* – people shift focus contact to some other topic to avoid connection, voices travel "over each" other, at extreme people talk all at once and no one feels a sense of belonging or being understood.
- *Confluence* – disregards differences, jumps to conclusions or actions without really discussing fully. There is fear of letting go or losing each other's support.

Development of these traits in employees is part of the skill building that is a key element of capability and focus shaping. A critical prerequisite to embedding such behaviours in everyday meetings is an appreciation of "awareness". Awareness involves more than the perception of environment, and entails being conscious of and comprehending the environment through the use of senses. It means that something has become figural out of the many sensations or events that go on simultaneously. The aim of awareness is to enlarge and enrich potentials in the background, so that what matters – what becomes figural – will be fresh, clear and engaging (Nevis, 1987). Thus an employee demonstrating responsibility and leadership traits takes in and processes all the information related to his/her environment plus his/her relationship with it, while keeping hold of what is the key issue (another key element of focus). Nevis (1987, p. 25) provides a list of things of which an individual should be aware, and these are presented below:

1 *Sensations:*
  - the outcomes of seeing: sights;
  - the outcomes of hearing: sounds;
  - the outcomes of touching: textures, tactility;
  - the outcomes of gustation: tastes;
  - the outcomes of olfaction: smells;
  - the outcomes of proprioception: body tissue/kinaesthetic stimulation (tendons, muscles, etc.).
2 *Internal verbalisations and visualisations:*
  - thinking, ruminating, internal dialogue;
  - planning, wishing, hoping;
  - memory, remembering past events, history;
  - dreams and fantasies.
3 *Feelings:*
  - happiness, pleasure, contentment;
  - elation, zest, lust, joy, confidence;
  - sadness, depression, helplessness, despair;
  - fear, disgust, shame, remorse;
  - respect, awe, admiration, wonder, reverence;
  - irritation, rage, anger, jealousy, hatred;
  - vanity, self-confidence, pride;
  - affection, love, warmth, empathy;
  - boredom, indifference, scorn;
  - tenderness, compassion, pity;
  - guilt, anxiety.
4 *Values:*
  - predispositions, sets, inclinations, theories;
  - judgements and attributions;
  - summaries or generalizations of past experience;
  - nature of boundaries, prejudices.
5 *Interpersonal and group relations:*
  - participation patterns;
  - communication styles;
  - figural elements: content, energy, differences;
  - functional activities;
  - norms;
  - atmosphere, climate.

The process of awareness will bring out what is "figural" and clarify what requires attention or action, but it does not necessarily lead to action. People/ organisations can become stuck in their awareness. This "stuckness" we typically think of as "resistance" but this is a descriptive word that must be treated with care (Goldstein, 1992, p. 20). For example, a group or individual may be trying to signify something about how they are being approached. As discussed earlier, resistance does not necessarily indicate an absence of will; on the contrary it indicates presence of inappropriate will, perhaps as a result of "emotional labour". As Zinker (1998, p. 118) has pointed out, in attempting to overcome resistance (that is, appropriately shape the will field), one must always be sensitive to the validity of the person's inner experience, the inner life.

In the next subsection we describe our approach to creating the characteristics of happy families that Zinker posits, and a level of communication that acknowledges and embraces the notion that real communications draw people nearer to each other. Note that in our practice we convert the contents of the three lists above into instruments.

Process
As discussed previously, once ideal focus, will and capability are defined, the system forms a "strange attractor", and individuals in the organization will make meaning to produce order from chaos through these fields. This process of "sense making" is critical to organizational success (Weick, 2000). We interpret this to mean that when focus, will and capability are defined appropriately, personal responsibility and leadership will be promoted naturally. The key to performance optimization is the continual dynamic tuning of the degree of overlap of the fields based on re-making and re-shaping meaning through development initiatives. We believe that the most powerful dynamic systemic field-development initiative is based on action learning.

Action learning was originated by Revans in the mid-1940s as a means to increase coal production in the UK (Revans, 1945), and is now widely practiced round the world (Smith and Peters, 1997). It is a win/win individual and company approach to learning and development that at the same time is capable of resolving significant business, organizational and social problems. It is a form of learning through experience, "by doing", where the job environment is the classroom.

Action learning has a framework designed to capture and build on what is, rather than operate in a pure, detached, analytical and rational world of what should be. Action learning provides the forge in which an individual's actions are shaped through their own personal reflection and the questioning insight of fellow action-learning group members. By promoting reflection and insightful inquiry with a small group of perceptive partners in situations where solutions are not always obvious, and by leaving responsibility for implementation of the solution in the participant's hands, it is particularly suited to enhancing traits of personal responsibility and leadership.

Action learning starts with the key issues facing an organization and an individual within it. From there, people are encouraged to draw from the body of knowledge – books, journals, other people, company literature, other firms – appropriate, targeted and contextualised information. This approach is elicitive, in that it elicits information the participants feel is relevant, rather than disseminates to participants the knowledge that any power group thinks is necessary.

A key point is that actions and outcomes still remain the responsibility of the individual participant. Action learning provides the safe environment or "practice field" for learning to occur, whilst recognizing that real responsibility lies with the participants who must own the business outcomes. This is a very important concept that is considered essential to learning and well-being in psychoanalytical practice. For example Winnicott termed it a "transitional space" (Phillips, 1988, p. 5); a place that "both joins and separates the baby and the mother" (Phillips, 1988, p. 28).

What is more, in using the organization itself as a learning laboratory, it does not require any special set of conditions to be in place before it can be effective. Action learning works well in a bureaucracy, in a flat organization, in a firm culturally hostile to education and development, in a firm encouraging self-actualization. It does so because its whole ethos is learning about the surrounding context, and learning to be effective within it, thus leveraging the prevailing culture to its own advantage.

Action learning programs work with small groups where members encourage each other to discuss, share, pool their ambitions and experiences, and therefore create something else, a gestalt, where the group yields a better result than individuals could. The practical integration of the focus, will and capability fields into an action learning framework has been detailed elsewhere (Smith, 1997), and for small group meeting settings (Smith and Day, 2000). We treat action learning as providing guiding principles for meetings, and in these settings we use an informal approach to effectively map focus, will and capability against four questions (the 4Qs) that are central to action learning:
1 What am I/we trying to accomplish here?
2 What helps me/us?
3 What hinders me/us?
4 What am I/are we going to do to fix the situation?

These four questions, and indeed the five traditional steps of action learning (Smith, 1997), collapse naturally to fit the three phases of Egan's counselling model (Reddy, 1987; Summerfield and van Oudtshoorn, 1995):
1 Understanding;
2 Challenging; and
3 Resourcing.

This provides a means for either managers with counselling skills or specialists to readily function in our action learning approach. It is also normal for action learning groups to utilize a facilitator or coach either continuously or in a sporadic "helicopter" mode; this role typically involves modelling and transferring to group members capabilities that can be labelled counselling skills (Bull, 1996). These skills facilitate group members in progressing the 4Qs with regard to the three performance fields.

When the facilitator's role is expanded to include Gestalt (Nevis, 1987), psychodynamic (Hirschhorn, 1990), psychoanalytic (Gabriel *et al.*, 1999), and other process consultation principles discussed in earlier sections, the opportunity for group members to explore all aspects of focus, will and capability is greatly enhanced. In this way, intermittent in-context exploration of vision, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, self-actualization and quality of life, can be carried out in meetings, groups, or program settings, and most importantly, made part of the organization's normal business processes.

Conclusion

In order to optimize enterprise performance and longevity we believe that it is critical that all employees demonstrate appropriate personal responsibility and leadership throughout the enterprise – in other words, every person exhibiting leadership, not just "the leaders". We conclude on the basis of the guidelines presented in this two-part paper that this is feasible. We believe that a key step in the development of such a culture is familiarity with the concept of the performance system. Such a system can then be used to analyse, shape and monitor the kind of culture desired.

In part 1 of this paper we construct a theoretical "New Science" foundation for such a performance system consisting of the three fields focus, will and capability. This theoretical platform is founded in the concepts of self-organizing systems and self-renewal plus development and maintenance of "fields of meaning". We describe how these three fields act as "conceptual controls" to give form to work, and to structure reality at the level of the individual.

In part 2 we outline some explicit initiatives that an organization can undertake in order to influence the three performance fields so that "ideal" behaviours (and therefore performance) will in principle be developed and maintained. These initiatives will have the benefit of addressing the endemic shortcomings we discussed in part 1 of this paper.

In our opinion, the most critical aspect of focus is the organization's "vision". It is also the foundation for the sense of personal responsibility that we wish to develop. Vision must be developed organization wide in a collaborative fashion or at least in a shared fashion at the local level e.g. within a team.

One of the aspects of capability that we believe has become under-valued is an appreciation of the physiological needs of individual employees. This is catastrophic in our view since we believe the concept of self-actualization is critical to the development of personal responsibility and leadership traits in all employees.

Initiatives are discussed to address these shortcomings in the shaping of the focus and capability fields, and these activities are in themselves very powerful in shaping the will field by pulling it into being rather than mandating a certain state of will. Indeed these factors need to be addressed before any direct attempt to influence will is undertaken.

When will is to be shaped directly, it is our conclusion that organizations should familiarize their employees with the Gestalt concept of "good functioning" that emphasizes the value of awareness of self and others in the present moment.

Finally we describe a systemic approach to shaping all three fields simultaneously based on changing the way meetings of all kinds are run. We conclude that meetings provide a natural systemic way to shape focus, will and capability if they are run appropriately, fostering feelings of purposefulness and competence, and energizing individuals to act towards the organisation's vision. The outcome of this holistic approach is that members feel a valued part of the organisation, connected internally with their own needs and externally to the needs of others.

An important notion here involves having people "meet at their boundary" so that they are aware of their own needs and are willing to articulate them to others, giving freedom to their passions, hopes, desires and fears, moving away from the façade of rationality, and becoming attentive to the psychic needs of others. A critical pre-requisite to embedding such behaviours in everyday meetings is an appreciation of "awareness". Awareness involves more than the perception of environment, and entails being conscious of and comprehending the environment through the use of senses.

We contend that once ideal focus, will and capability are defined, the system forms a "strange attractor", and individuals in the organization will make meaning to produce order from chaos through these fields. This process of "sense making" is critical to organizational success. We interpret this to mean that when focus, will and capability are defined appropriately, personal responsibility and leadership will be promoted naturally. The key to performance optimization is the continual dynamic tuning of the degree of overlap of the fields based on re-making and re-shaping meaning through development initiatives.

We conclude that the most powerful dynamic systemic field-development initiative eventuates when meetings in general are run according to the action learning philosophy; with participants who have familiarity with the performance system and its application; and facilitators who have familiarity with disciplines such as Gestalt, counseling skills, psychodynamics, and psychoanalysis, and/or with the fundamentals of Eastern philosophies.

Our approach is based on tried and true principles and methods that are well

substantiated in the references cited. We
have brought these techniques together in
new ways to provide what we believe is a
powerful process to achieve the objectives
noted in the above paragraph. However, we
feel it is up to each organization to forge their
own approach whilst being mindful of
themes that we have explored in this paper.
And it is incumbent on each individual to
forge characteristics of individual
responsibility and leadership in helping to
direct and support their organization's
efforts and achieve self-actualization. As
Wheatley (1992, p. 7) says so eloquently
"There are no recipes or formulas, no
checklists or advice that describe 'reality'.
There is only what we create through
engagement with others and events".

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