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Integrating Management Paradigms: The Competing Values Framework

The best managers and leaders create and sustain a tension-filled balance between two extremes. They combine core values with elastic strategies. They get things done without being done. They know what they stand for and what they want, and they communicate their vision with clarity and power. But they also know that they must understand and respond to the complex array of forces that push and pull organizations in so many different directions.

—Bolman & Deal, *Leading with Soul*, 1995

Control has become a limitation, it slows you down. You've got to balance freedom with some control, but you've got to have more freedom than you ever dreamed of.

—Jack Welch, CEO, General Electric

For much of the past half-century, management philosophy has coalesced around two broad schools of thought: A rationalistic school based on the principles of scientific management and the theory of bureaucratic control, and a humanistic school based on the view of organizations as interactive systems evolving around the need to respond to the psychosocial needs of the individuals within them.

THE RATIONALISTIC AND HUMANISTIC APPROACHES TO MANAGEMENT

The rationalistic approach is positioned as an efficiency-driven, control-oriented ideology with a strong emphasis on the centralization of decision making, development of clear policies and procedural specifications, unambiguous roles and responsibilities, a high degree of formalization, divisible tasks, high specialization, standardization, and functional departmentation to reduce duplication. Running like a machine, this organization is viewed as highly efficient, yet inflexible and anti-innovative. Its strict hierarchy and unchallenged authority is aimed at achieving obedience, facilitating administrative innovations, and exchanging good performance and compliance with rewards, while sanctioning poor performance and undesirable behavior.

The humanistic approach has distanced itself from the rationalistic view by centering on individual well-being, employees' work conditions, job satisfaction, training, and communication. Evolving into what has been called a human resource perspective, this approach calls for giving employees greater opportunities for involvement in decision making over work processes. The philosophy is that free from the burden of being overcontrolled, with more autonomy and greater discretion, and with more influence over the outcomes of work, employees will synergize their efforts and perform with excellence. The prognosis is simple, yet powerful—a humanistic approach can lead to high commitment and morale—employees would regain trust and confidence in their managers and ultimately would become accountable for the results of their work. Proponents of the humanistic approach (e.g., Argyris, Herzberg, Likert, Maslow, McGregor) enthusiastically have called for integration of the needs of individuals with those of the organization.

Particular attention was focused on the idea of making employees feel more useful and important by giving them meaningful jobs, and by giving as much autonomy, responsibility, and recognition as possible as a means of getting them involved in their work. Job enrichment, combined with a more participative, democratic, and employee-centered style of leadership, arose as an alternative to the excessively narrow, authoritarian, and dehumanizing work orientation generated by scientific management and classic management theory (Morgan, 1986, p. 42).

This humanistic approach, then, advocates the need for flexibility, development of employees through delegation and cross-training, open communication, tolerance for ambiguity, the nurturing of creativity, and risk taking. For these reasons, the humanistic approach became quite popular during the 1960s and the 1970s. Many midlevel managers and

corporate executives began to participate in T-groups and management development programs designed to enhance self-awareness and interpersonal skills.

POLAR RELATIONSHIPS

If you are part of the scientific management tradition, you may view competencies as the specifications for the human machinery desired to provide maximum organizational efficiency and effectiveness. If you are part of the humanistic management tradition, you may view competencies as the key that unlocks the door to individuals in realizing their maximum potential, developing ethical organizational systems, and providing maximum growth opportunities for personnel.

—Richard Boyatzis, *The Competent Manager*, 1982

The differences between the rationalistic and humanistic approaches have been captured by such popular distinctions as theory "X" and theory "Y," and have been referred to as mechanistic versus organic systems of management (Morgan, 1986). This distinction has also been reinforced in contemporary approaches to management and organization as the contingency and congruence theories, which claim that organizations must develop isomorphic relationships with their external environments to increase their chances to survive. Commonly known as "survival of the fittest," these theories propose that organizations with forms congruent with their environments thrive. Placid, stable environments with little competition and with lower customer expectations enable an organization to predict marginal shifts and respond to them with incremental changes. Changes that are manageable and that do not disrupt the routine flow of work call for a bureaucratic form of organization. In dynamic, changing environments with customers demanding higher product and service quality and with stiff domestic and global competition, organizations are propelled to maintain high flexibility and quick responses of the kind found in organic or interactive systems. Organic systems are nimbler and quicker to respond to market demands. They are decentralized, problem oriented, informal, fluid, and have on-line information that flows laterally and can reach different parts of the organization at the same time. Organic systems of management provide the flexibility, quickness, and smart response needed to deal with the fluctuations of the environment. NYNEX's chairman and CEO Ivan Seidenberg captured the essence of the differences between the two approaches by suggesting that the technological and market changes in the

telecommunication industry forced his company to drift toward an organic configuration. Shaking off one hundred years of traditional, bureaucratic culture to become a market-driven, customer-focused system was necessary to make NYNEX agile and able to respond quickly to external pressures, while competing effectively against the leanest and meanest industry startups. Accordingly, under the pretense of social and economic change, managers found themselves confronting problems for which a bureaucratic system seemed ill-suited to handle. Bluestone and Bluestone (1993) elaborate:

By the 1980s, bureaucratic firms were too bloated with midlevel managers to be efficient and much too burdened by rules and regulations to keep up with foreign competition. More and more organizations began to realize that top-down bureaucratic control was antithetical to productivity, quality, and innovation. (p. 131)

It was in this context that discourse on organizational culture and employee commitment began to attract the attention of both practitioners and management gurus. Management consultants as well as organizational researchers shared the view that an altered approach was needed to help managers create adaptive, more effective systems that were based on the principles of shared knowledge, accessibility, innovation, empowerment, and high involvement (Bradford & Cohen, 1984; Kanter, 1983; Peters & Waterman 1982; Piore & Sabel, 1984). Quality pioneers such as Juran, Deming, Feigenbaum, Crosby, and Peters have claimed that Japan's industrial success is attributed to the Japanese ideology, which centers on the value of human resources, employee loyalty, free communication, and joint decision making. They suggested that American firms would do well to emulate the Japanese success story by emphasizing and developing strong cultures that foster concern for quality, flexibility, and customer satisfaction (Ouchi, 1981). Deming's appearance on a National Broadcasting Company (NBC) TV program on June 24, 1980, highlighted this necessity: "If Japan can, why can't we?" By the end of the 1980s, the notions of culture and commitment began to gain a stronghold in many organizations. Managers initiated change programs aimed at rethinking the way organizations are structured, work is conducted, and people are managed and rewarded. Organizations began to take on a whole new outlook, as one writer described:

Ideas provoked action, and business people began experimenting . . . More than anything else, companies began monkeying with their methods of

managing people. New cross-functional teams were designed to break down barriers between departments. New pay-for-performance systems were supposed to get everyone pulling in the same direction. Managers learned new techniques of motivation. Directives were out, coaching was in. Sitting in an office was out, walking around was in. The very word *employee* began disappearing in favor of *associate*. (Case, 1993, p. 83)

More and more companies experiencing severe competition found resolution in the revival of the quality circle movement. Companies wanted to reexamine their operating assumptions about management approaches and experiment with various ways of involving employees in improvement of work processes. Quality circles were the most common vehicles for eliciting suggestions on how to improve operations. However, problems began to arise when little attention was given to how the quality circles fit into the new core values, vision, and mission of organizations utilizing the quality circle concept. Quality circles were quickly subdued by the rigid, autocratic approach to management in which the old style still governed and dominated the infant and not yet proven successful quality circle.

TQM PHILOSOPHY

Other organizational researchers have claimed that TQM brings the two paradigms, rationalistic and humanistic, into agreement by establishing an optimal balance in calling for a sociotechnical approach, where technical and human needs are interdependent with one another (Trist & Murray, 1993) to achieve the goal of adaptation without the need to give up on the premises of either one of the paradigms. These researchers argued that TQM's scientific approach is consistent with the theories of the rationalist school and its emphasis on streamlining and standardizing work processes, while the structural elements of TQM are consistent with the humanistic approach, which centers on individuals and groups (Drucker, 1993; Schmidt & Finnigan, 1992, 1994). Schmidt and Finnigan (1992) succinctly explain how the two major streams of management practices come together in the management ideology of TQM:

Technology-oriented theories have focused on how to do things with greater precision and efficiency and socially oriented theories have focused on how to get people in an organization to work together in ways that are more productive and satisfying. Some managers have been

guided more by the first stream, believing that a rigorously controlled approach to running an organization is more realistic than any approach that depends too heavily on the interest, commitment and judgment of people (especially lower level workers). Other managers have followed the preachments of the “humanistic” approach—trusting, developing, and involving people as their strategy for producing organizational health. In Total Quality Management, these two approaches come together in ways that reinforce each other. (p. 12)

Total Quality Management provided frustrated managers with a feasible set of principles to integrate the technical and social systems of the organization into a well-coordinated system unified by external objectives. The message that came from the TQM gurus was astonishingly simple: Take on an outside-in perspective to managing organizations. Effectiveness is not an internal measure but rather an external measure defined by the ultimate consumer of organizational goods and services. Articulating this view into the mission and strategy of the organization has led many organizations to adopt the inverted pyramid structure with customers on top and managers on the bottom. Employees were seen as a resource and were expected to meet customer needs proficiently. Accountability was outward to customers, with managers being responsive to the needs of employees. As organizations increasingly spent million of dollars on training and development programs in support of the quality vision, a puzzling pattern emerged: there were as many ways to implement TQM as there were companies adopting it. Nevertheless, four principles seem to be common to all manifestations of TQM: synergy and empowerment, continuous improvement, process orientation, and customer focus. These principles were supported by the value of:

- Creating a climate of openness and trust
- Harnessing the power of teamwork
- Solving problems systematically by thinking in the long term
- Motivating employees by rewarding both intangible and measurable contributions
- Developing commitment to the goals of continuous improvement and learning in the organization

These principles and values also required ownership that is supported by a shared vision, process champion, and exemplary leadership (i.e., precious commodities in turbulent times in which attention is given primarily to responding to short term pressures, as well as turf

and status issues). The implementation of TQM, quite naturally, has turned much attention to the role of the middle manager, the mediator or information transmitter, who is centrally located within the chain of command, between the strategic apex and the operating core of an organization. TQM appeared to be a major threat to the power balance within the organization and a destabilizing, menacing force that should be counteracted, fended off, or extinguished. Paradoxically, those managers who in the past were in favor of change were now opposing it. Change became a self-limiting process. In light of the important position that middle managers occupy, quality practitioners and researchers have offered advice and techniques on how senior managers should handle the middle managers' subversion of the change process (Brigham, 1993; McDermott, 1993). They warned that supervisors and middle managers may not understand or welcome the new roles they must play. McDermott (1993) went on to describe what the senior manager is up against when trying to convince middle managers to embrace and lead a total quality effort. Unless middle managers are convinced that the new world is a better place, they may react negatively. They may engage in battles for turf.

Although other problems with TQM have involved lack of vision and the inability to communicate clearly the goals of achieving greater quality through an organization-wide effort, it seems that the quality movement has never been able to solidify its underlying assumption as a gestalt or an integrative approach to management. Positioning itself on the shaky ground between the humanistic and the rationalist paradigms, TQM quickly became the target for criticism from both sides, with the rationalists leading the way. It was not surprising then to find that seven out of ten TQM efforts were nothing more than enhanced problem-solving efforts aimed primarily at improving processes, with a little lip service given to "changing culture" (Crouch, 1992). Others (Schmidt & Finnigan, 1992) criticized the lack of vision on the part of the TQM sponsors, who neglected to embrace the systemic, integrative notion of TQM and instead focused primarily on design specifications, manufacturing processes, and statistical tools. Still others attributed the failure of TQM to the narrow focus of senior managers, who viewed the quality program as a way of stamping out quality problems, rather than as a transformation in philosophy, values, and ultimately a state of well-being and purpose (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Rationalizing the new reality, Galbraith and Lawler (1993) excused the quality pioneers by claiming that "they are nothing more than engineers, statisticians, and consultants who are naive to the importance of the human behavior dimension" (p. 144).

This shift away from the underlying assumptions of the quality movement must be restored on two levels—cognitive and behavioral. Cognitively, senior and midlevel managers must turn their attention to shifting their thinking and energy toward sustaining the subtle balance between the rationalistic and the humanistic approaches. Behaviorally, they must take the necessary steps to become the architects of change and become accountable for the process and outcomes of the quality effort. Managers must abandon their control stronghold and learn to lead, to unleash the creativity of their staff, and to coach them for continuous improvement (Galbraith & Lawler, 1993). Middle managers are being asked to shift their paradigms by eliminating their entrenched bureaucratic attributes and establishing new ones that are more suitable for an entrepreneurial culture. In other words, instead of being turf conscious and using defensive communication, managers are expected to maintain openness and to see the sociotechnical movement from a broader, more systemic point of view. They see the shift in paradigms from the prism of a cultural transformation that can help the organization transcend to higher levels of performance. Schmidt and Finnigan (1994, p. 11) list the key elements of the newly integrative approach:

- Organizational structure becomes flatter, more flexible, and less hierarchical.
- The focus shifts to continuous improvement in systems and processes (continue to improve it even if it is not broken).
- Workers perceive supervisors as coaches and facilitators.
- Supervisor-subordinate relationships shift to interdependency, trust, and mutual commitment.
- The focus of employee effort shifts to team effort; workers see themselves as teammates.
- Management perceives labor as an asset and training as an investment.
- The organization asks customers to define quality and develops measures to determine if customers' requirements are being met.

Other contemporary views of organization and management appeared to avoid the control-flexibility dichotomy in favor of an integrative, or holistic approach. This approach, often referred to as "gestalt," was aimed at evaluating managerial effectiveness based on universal principles that embrace contextual, informational, and judgmental variables. An example of one such integrative approach came from developers of behavioral models of decision making (Vroom, 1973; Vroom & Jago, 1988):

We were tired of debates over the relative merits of theory X and theory Y and of the truism that leadership depends on the situation. We felt that it was time for the behavioral sciences to move beyond such generalities . . . Our aim was to develop a set of ground rules for matching a manager's leadership behavior to the demands of the situation. It was critical that these ground rules be operational, so that any manager could determine how he should act in any decision-making situation. (Vroom, 1973, p. 66)

This integration, however, requires a different prism to understand and explain how organizations work and how managers should function. One example of this view is the Competing Values Framework of organizational effectiveness developed by Quinn & Rohrbaugh (1983) and expanded by Quinn (1988).

COMPETING VALUES FRAMEWORK (CVF)

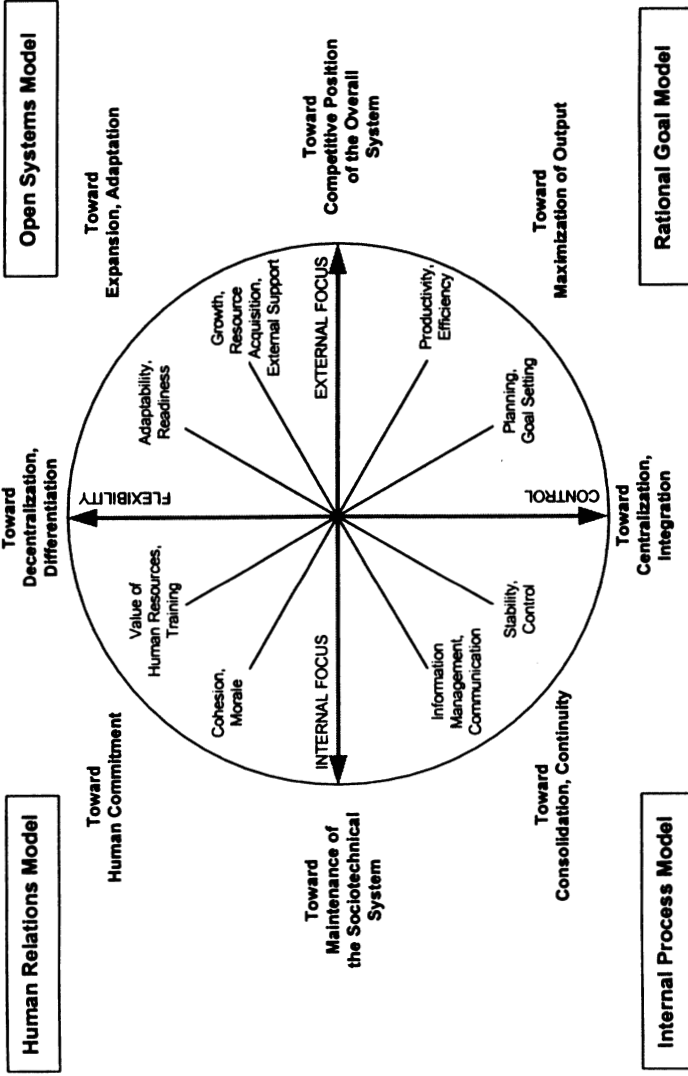
Yin and Yang ☯: Two forces through whose essences, according to Taoist cosmology, the universe was produced and cosmic harmony is maintained.

—*Webster's Dictionary*, 1987, vol. 2, p. 1142

The Competing Values Framework (CVF) portrays the inherent contradictions facing organizations and managers on two axes or dimensions. The horizontal axis is one of focus: internal versus external. This axis reflects the expectation managers have that organizations should be concerned with what goes on inside the organization as well as with producing for and servicing an external environment. Specifically, while organizations must be able to manipulate, monitor, and measure internal tasks, technology, and personnel, they must also be responsive to the environment, including demographic changes, global economic events, market forces, government regulations, and competitors' behaviors and actions. The vertical axis of the CVF portrays the opposing expectations of flexibility and control. We expect organizations to be controlling systems. In this way, they provide a predictable and stable work world. At the same time, we expect organizations to be flexible and able to respond to myriad human needs and situations, to adapt to changes in their external environments, and to be a dynamic force in society.

The juxtaposition of these two axes forms four quadrants, each of which reflects a different model of organizational effectiveness criteria (see figure 1.1). The external horizontal axis and the control vertical axis

Figure 1.1. Competing Values Framework Effectiveness Criteria



Source: Robert E. Quinn. *Beyond Rational Management: Mastering the Paradoxes and Competing Demands of High Performance* (p. 48). © Copyright 1988 Jossey-Bass Inc., Publishers.

appear in the lower right quadrant and define the *rational goal model*. This model reflects the view that organizations are effective if they meet their goals. Fundamental to this model is the need for structure and direction. The two managerial leadership roles associated with this quadrant are Producer and Director. Briefly, managers in the Producer role are task and work focused with high energy and motivation. They are self-motivated, motivate others, and pursue productivity. Managers in the Director role are decisive, provide direction for others, clarify expectations, and pursue goal clarity.

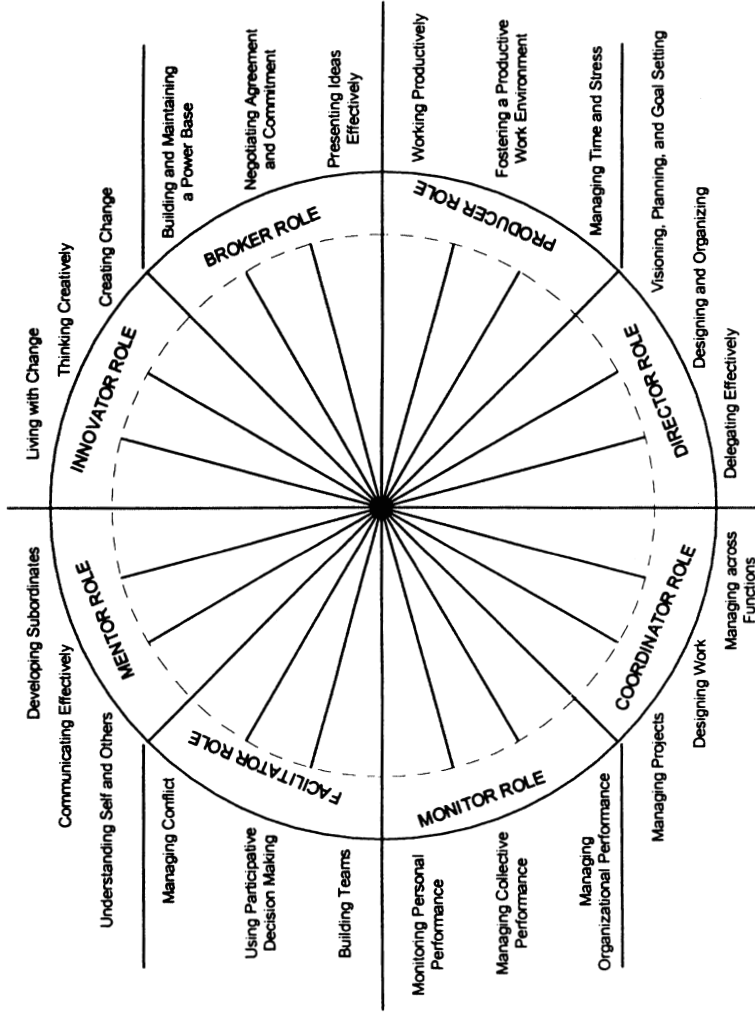
The internal horizontal axis and the control vertical axis appear in the lower left quadrant and define the *internal processes model*. This model reflects the view that organizations are effective if they are stable and keep track of activities within the organization. Fundamental to this model is the need for stability and control. The two managerial leadership roles associated with this quadrant are Coordinator and Monitor. Briefly, managers in the Coordinator role maintain work flow, analyze task requirements, and organize staff efforts. They pursue stability and control. Managers in the Monitor role are concerned about facts, details, reports, paperwork, rules, and regulations. They pursue documentation and information management.

The internal horizontal axis and the flexibility vertical axis appear in the upper left quadrant and define the *human relations model*. This model reflects the view that organizations are effective if they are able to tap the talents and thinking of their employees. Fundamental to this model is the concern for attention to human needs. The two managerial leadership roles associated with this quadrant are Mentor and Facilitator. Briefly, managers in the Mentor role are sensitive to the needs of employees and help employees plan their career growth and development. They pursue high morale and commitment. Managers in the Facilitator role build cohesion and teamwork among employees, use group problem solving and conflict management. They pursue participation and openness.

The external horizontal axis and the flexibility vertical axis in the upper right quadrant define the *open system model*. This model reflects the view that organizations are effective when they are able to anticipate changes in the economic-sociopolitical environment and even thrive when such changes occur. Fundamental to this model is the need to survive in a turbulent arena. The two managerial leadership roles associated with this quadrant are Innovator and Broker. Briefly, managers in the Innovator role are creative, deal with risk and uncertainty, envision needed changes, and help others to adapt to change. They pursue innovation and adaptation, external support, and resource acquisition.

Figure 1.2. Competing Values Framework

Managerial Competencies



Source: R. E. Quinn, S. R. Faerman, M. P. Thompson & M. R. McGrath. *Becoming a Master Manager: A Competency Framework* (p. 16). New York: John Wiley & Sons. © 1996 John Wiley & Sons, reprinted by permission.

Managers in the Broker role are politically astute and represent the work unit to people inside and outside the organization. Brokers link the organization externally and focus on networking and establishing strategic alliances and partnerships with other organizations.

The CVF represents a universal image of the repertoire of roles manifested in the behaviors of effective managers. For each role, Quinn, Faerman, Thompson, and McGrath (1996) have identified a set of three competencies essential for effective task performance. The CVF leadership roles and their associated competencies are depicted in figure 1.2.

The CVF roles can be viewed as both mutually exclusive (i.e., differentiated) and collectively exhaustive (i.e., integrated). Alone and together, each role subscribes to the need to balance its "time in use" or emphasis against the range of requirements coming from the other roles. For example, despite the fact that in playing the role of the Director, the manager is assumed to have a task orientation, some aspects of facilitation or even mentoring (involving the two roles at the polar opposite in the CVF) must also be manifested in the behavior of the manager to achieve effective managerial leadership. Similarly, while the Mentor is engaged in developing the leadership capabilities of employees to meet new organizational needs and goals, he or she must also balance coaching and counseling skills with the need to achieve synergy across functions, thus entering the domain or "turf" of the Coordinator. The value of this framework is in allowing managers to pursue a systematic journey of self-directed learning and self-development by helping them identify relative weaknesses and strengths and enhance their competence level. More on this is included in chapter 9.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE COMPETING VALUES FRAMEWORK

A key point of the Competing Values Framework (CVF) is that organizations are inherently contradictory entities, and therefore, organizational effectiveness criteria are fundamentally opposing, contradictory, and may be mutually exclusive. While we expect organizations to maintain stability and integration by paying strong attention to their internal workings and procedures, we also expect organizations to be responsive and adaptive by responding to pressures coming from the external environment. This approach, then, highlights the fact that organizations operate under the burden of contradictory, competing, and conflicting expectations. Responding to these expectations is vital for

the success (effectiveness) of the organization. Obviously, this burden is not borne by organizations per se, but by the managerial leaders in these organizations. These individuals function within a context of complex and contradictory expectations. In this way, the CVF reflects on the contradictory criteria of effectiveness that describe managerial leadership. The following section is a detailed examination of the Competing Values Framework's utility in facilitating communication across managerial levels within organizations.

USING THE CVF TO COMMUNICATE LEADERSHIP ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Life is like a kaleidoscope. We are caught in its ever-changing patterns, but we try to freeze a favorite pattern. We try to control and order life around us and within us.

—Dr. Stuart Atkins, *The Name of Your Game*, 1995

The inherently contradictory nature of organizations is addressed by the Competing Values Framework (CVF) and by the different role behaviors expected from managers. Some of the roles seem to be opposing in that they reflect the conflicting and, at times, mutually exclusive organizational effectiveness criteria. Since managers and leaders presumably are effective within an organizational context, it is particularly important to look at organizational effectiveness criteria (like those mentioned above) when assessing the performance of managerial leadership. But, perhaps, one of the most important benefits of using the CVF lies in enabling managers to increase their self-awareness concerning the strengths and weaknesses associated with playing the eight universal roles. Thus, the utility of the framework as an effective medium of communication to align managers' values and roles within and outside the chain of command is immeasurable.

AVOIDING THE TRAP OF EXCESS: THE KEY TO EFFECTIVE INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

Weaknesses are nothing more than strengths pushed to excess. Confidence turns into arrogance, flexibility turns into inconsistency, trust turns into gullibility, and analysis turns into paralysis.

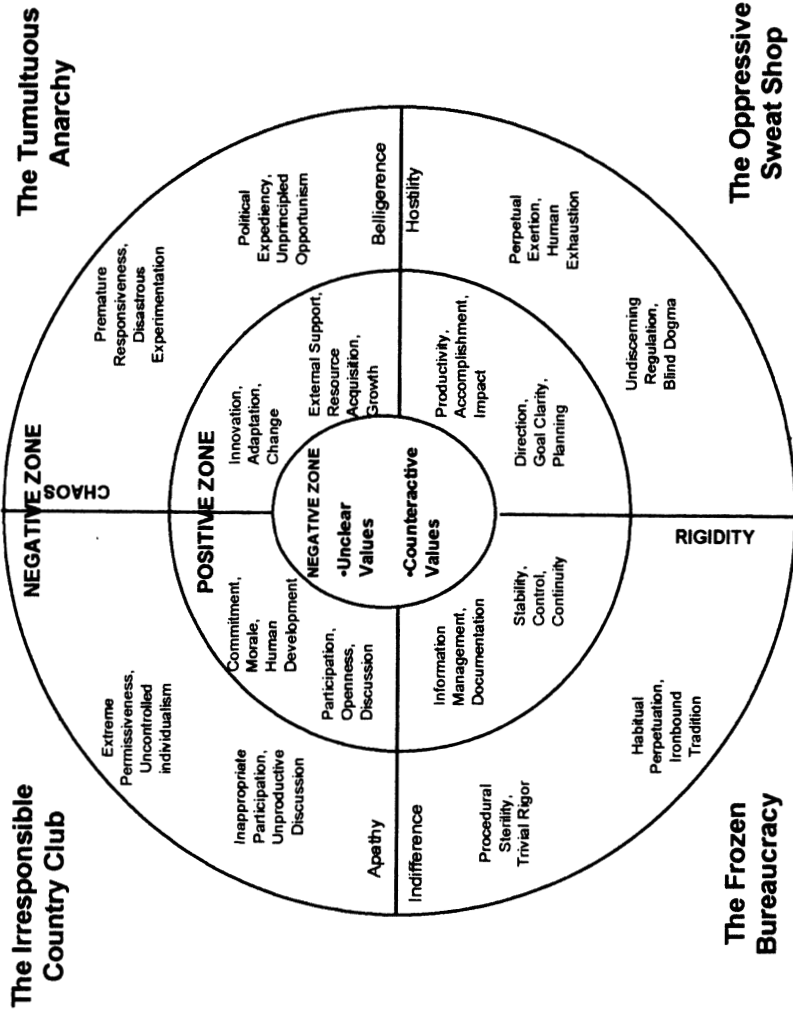
—Dr. Stuart Atkins, *The Name of Your Game*, 1995

All too often managers attach values to their own and others' behaviors, form attitudes toward "desired" and "undesired" behaviors, and develop biases involving what works and what does not work. These biases are translated into mindsets and patterned behaviors that guide managers' thinking and actions. Gradually, these values are converted into beliefs, communication styles, and stereotyped behavior that is expected and predictable. Psychologically, the manager develops a set of cognitive approaches that is consistent with others' perceptions of his or her behavior. The drive toward cognitive consonance, although essential in producing a consistent pattern of expectations, may often hinge on vertical thinking and tunnel vision or even on insecurity and lack of confidence. Trapped by his or her style and unable to explore and use other modes of thinking patterns and behaviors, the manager very quickly may become the victim of his or her success. The position of this chapter is that managers must be attentive to their blind spots—or the behavioral and perceptual areas known to others but unknown to them—to increase their personal effectiveness. Expanding the "open window" should help reduce the potential for interpersonal conflict. Here, however, the *kind* of problem is different since both the perceptual and behavioral context of the thinking pattern (i.e., as reflected in decision-making or goal-setting processes) and actions taken (e.g., resource allocations, conflict resolution) are made predictable by the uniformity of the manager's style. The danger is in overvaluing or overemphasizing a particular type of style and thus creating excess.

Robert Quinn (1988) believes that overemphasizing a style is pathological and unsustainable. Referring to it as the "negative zone" he suggested that managers must be alert to the dysfunctionality of overemphasizing a style and learn how to deal with it. As seen in figure 1.3, in the upper-left quadrant of the CVF, a manager overemphasizing the human relations criteria encourages extreme permissiveness and a *laissez-faire* attitude. The manager lacks decisiveness and totally ignores the need to articulate the vision for the organization, the charter for the group, or the objectives for individuals. Individuals and groups take over by solving problems and making decisions in a noncoherent way, somewhat reminiscent of the "garbage can" process (Cohen, March & Olsen, 1972). In the upper-right quadrant there is so much emphasis on creativity and innovation that discontinuity and disruption occur. Too much energy is expended on ideas that are not pursued or implemented. Lack of focus and unclear vision and direction cause the organization to drift toward an "organized anarchy" (Cohen, March & Olsen, 1972).

The lower-right quadrant contains the "oppressive sweatshop." Concerns for clear goals and systematic collective efforts are met with

Figure 1.3. The Positive and Negative Zones



Source: R. E. Quinn. *Beyond Rational Management: Mastering the Paradoxes and Competing Demands of High Performance* (p. 70). © Copyright 1988 Jossey-Bass, Inc. Publishers.

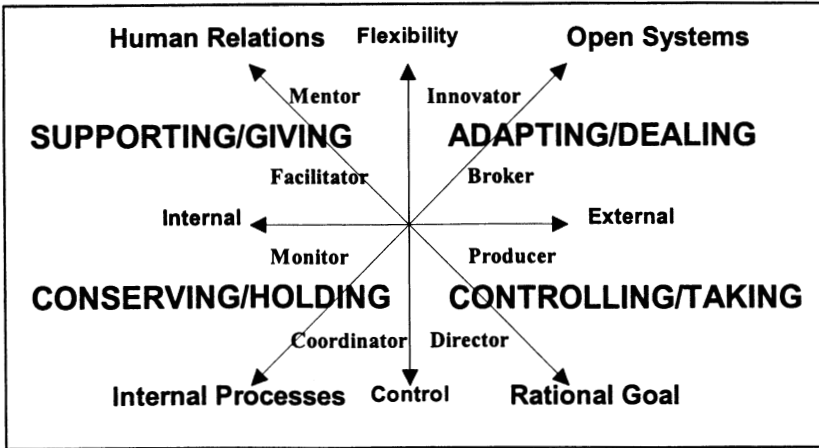
an overemphasis on strict regulation and a build up of a general adaptation pattern that leads to defensiveness in communication and a dogmatic regime that demands to do more with less to meet the bottom-line goals of operating efficiencies and greater profits. The lower-left quadrant conforms to the frozen bureaucracy with an overemphasis on control through documentation and measurement. The organization develops a culture of self-preservation and perpetuation of the status quo. All of these characteristics and outcomes are dysfunctional and result from excess reliance on a particular style, a unidimensional, or simplistic view of the world. When overemphasizing their territory consciously or subconsciously, the Mentor and Facilitator may bring about “uncontrolled individualism” and “unproductive meetings” with their excess pathological behaviors. The Innovator and Broker may create conditions for “premature adaptability” and “unsystematic opportunism.” The Producer and Director’s excess behavior may lead to human exhaustion and absolute rigidity, while the Coordinator and Monitor’s extreme bias toward their domains may breed a “mechanistic system” characterized by excessive formalization, procedural sterility, and inflexibility.

According to Robert Quinn (1988), the effectiveness of managerial leadership is shaped by the ability of the manager to integrate dynamically the demands coming from the full range of the roles expected from a manager. Figure 1.3 illustrates that effective managers are careful to remain within the positive zone and yet have the behavioral complexity needed to move from one set of competing values to another. To become master managers they must frame and reframe or maintain situational flexibility and possess the requisite skills to move comfortably between the various domains represented in the positive zone.

Understanding the concept of the negative zone and the consequences of getting stuck in a predominant orientation is important to improve the ability to manage people and improve interpersonal communication. Stuart Atkins (1995), in his acclaimed Life Orientations* training program, suggested strategies that can be used to avert excess and move back to the positive zone. His typology consists of four orientations or patterns, each with associated values and weaknesses: These orientations are: Supporting/Giving, Controlling/Taking, Conserving/Holding, and Adapting/Dealing. Atkins’s typology can help individuals identify their own strengths and weaknesses and can also be used to diagnose the typecasting of key people both intuitively and systematically.

*Life Orientations and LIFO are service and trademarks of Dr. Stuart Atkins.

Figure 1.4. Competing Values and Life Orientations



What is striking is the similarity between Atkin's typology and the quadrants (and roles) depicted by the CVF (see figure 1.4). Supporting/Giving seems to correlate with the human relations quadrant and the Mentor and Facilitator roles; The Controlling/Taking orientation appears to include many of the characteristics associated with the rational goal quadrant and its two roles, the Producer and Director; Conserving/Holding tends to reflect the values associated with the internal processes quadrant and the expectations and roles manifested in the behaviors of the Monitor and Coordinator; Finally, the Adapting/Dealing orientation fits the context of the open systems quadrant with its emphasis on the values and criteria associated with change and adaptability and the set of expectations for the Innovator and Broker roles.

Supporting/Giving refers to the principled, cooperative, dedicated, and loyal individual, who is geared toward quality and excellence. Over-commitment to helping others, however, may cause someone to take responsibility for the communication rather than actively listening or empathizing with the communicator. Controlling/Taking describes the competent individual with directing skills, who is task oriented and persistent with a particular bias toward action and urgency. An overemphasis on actions and results may lead to too much aggressiveness, low tolerance for errors, impatience, and coercive use of power to achieve one's goals. Conserving/Holding indicates the practical and reserved individual, who uses reasoning and logic to persuade others. When the

strengths of this orientation are pushed to excess, this individual is perceived as stubborn, unimaginative, complicated, and data bound.

Adapting/Dealing is the orientation that is geared toward pleasing others in a tactful, enthusiastic, and flexible way. Adapting/Dealing, however, can slip into placating others, confusion, and ambiguity that may result in the loss of focus and clear direction.

A key element in this typology is the development of self-awareness as well as the understanding of the predominant orientation of individuals, regardless of one's personal biases. This understanding should help individuals overcome their own blind spots, as well as develop a high tolerance toward other, less preferred orientations or styles, and thus improve interpersonal communication. One way to overcome excess and reduce the potential for interpersonal conflicts is to obtain information about other people's thinking patterns and favorite orientations. Giving feedback about one's own orientation should also be used frequently to reduce the risks of high stress and personal tension. But individuals do not need to change their orientations or adopt the successful orientations of others, especially their opposites. What they need is to develop a full understanding of the scope of their associates' orientations and anticipate and organize the form and substance of their communication to capture the positive attention of their associates. According to Atkins (1995, p. 105):

We don't have to change ourselves to improve our communication with key people in our lives. What is required is that we take a small amount of time to think, to anticipate their questions and to answer them . . . By organizing our communications to answer the uppermost questions of the key person, we provide ourselves with alternatives from our usual way of communicating with the person. It is a change of pace, a different sound and look that can capture attention, get interest and stir action.

COMMUNICATION AUDITS USING THE COMPETING VALUES FRAMEWORK

The Competing Values Framework can be used as a communication audit tool to help management increase the effectiveness of communication on three levels:

Personal or Developmental: to increase one's self-awareness and self-understanding of strengths and weaknesses as perceived by individual performers

Vertical or managerial: to facilitate understanding of leadership roles across hierarchical levels

Lateral or functional: to measure one's communication performance and self-assessment against institutional requirements, organizational core values, and dominant culture, as well as expectations of key individuals across functional lines.

Effective communication audits can alert managers to gaps or overemphasis that might exist between observed and expected communication performance. Such audits can then be used to identify strengths and weaknesses of communication styles as well as to help develop measures to deal with these gaps. As such, a communication audit is an excellent diagnostic and intervention tool to reduce communication anxiety and increase the effectiveness and efficiency of communication flow within and outside the chain of command. Most communication audits touch on many aspects of organizational activities including the boundaries of the organization and its interface with the environment. Environmental scanning and stakeholder analysis, for example, are different means to assess key players in the external environment and their potential impact on the activities of the organization. On the other hand, network analysis or interaction analysis rely on sociometric methods aimed at tracing the communication patterns and processes across formal and informal systems to determine communication interdependencies and key access points to the system. Systematic audits usually cover six important steps: (1) planning to establish the purpose of the audit; (2) conducting assessment of top management's attitudes toward communication, as well as the perceptions of senior managers of specific communication strengths and weaknesses; (3) collecting and analyzing written communication material; (4) conducting focus groups, interviewing, and collecting first-hand data; (5) designing and running a survey instrument to get the broadest possible coverage; and (6) tabulating and communicating the results.

Often content analysis, which looks at messages according to specific criteria and vocabulary usage, is utilized to gain perspective about the fit between the objectives of the message and the form or substance of it. Content analysis, through sensitizing managers to the appropriateness of message composition and message form or substance that is relevant to the context of the communication relationship, is another communication audit tool that can support vertical and lateral communication. The following sections describe communication audit methodologies using the Competing Values Framework.