

Pre-Engagement Assessment

Determine the current organization condition regarding readiness for change using this methodology. This is also classified as "Pre-Diagnostic Assessment."

A. The Sponsor, Client and Primary Leadership Team. An ideal condition within which this change methodology will take hold effectively includes a sponsorship, client and primary leadership team who are receptive to the approach used (See Ten Elements of the *QWLC* Approach).

1. The Sponsor is normally an individual with the organizational influence to demand that this approach be used or demand that it be stopped once started. Typically, the Sponsor is highly influential in the earmarking of discretionary funds needed to fuel a long-term initiative and sufficient influence over the client that acting contrary to those influences would be organizationally unwise. Normally, the Sponsor is in the position of Board Chairman, or influential in the Division within which the organization is located. The Sponsor need not have any direct contact with the change effort.

2. The Client is the top leader/manager of the organization – titles range from CEO, to President, to Plant Manager.

3. The Primary Leadership Team is comprised of individuals who report directly to the Client.

B. The Guiding Coalition. It is often the case that a small group of 7 to 15 employees have been “chartered” by the client to promulgate change (something that will equate to cultural capacity improvement). Characteristically, the group meets periodically and has engaged in numerous activities to achieve stated outcomes but may not have been entirely successful for a reason that can be identified as “cultural” in its limitation. This group normally reflects the general composition of the workforce and has the confidence of both top management and front-line workers. The Primary Leadership Team may or may not be supportive of this group. One rationale for lack of complete support is the notion that the guiding coalition may be attempting to change or disrupt the current patterns of decision making thus altering the prerogatives of the Primary Leadership Team.

C. Organization Stability. Two conditions are paramount in this category: the “ownership” of the organization (potential change of ownership), and potential shifts in key leadership. Either condition renders the organization less stable than it might otherwise be.

D. In-use and Previously Used Change Technologies. It is of vital concern that the organization may have (or may currently be using) used incompatible change technologies. It may also add to the difficulty if the organization has used too many

change technologies (fad of the month orientation) over too short a period of time. Organizations build up an immunity to change if the leadership team tries to incorporate disparate change technology one-after-the-other. Those who are deep into the organization structure often have not had the opportunity to grasp one technology before it is abandoned in favor of another. Managers and supervisors will often develop a “wait and see” attitude about something new. This natural hesitation is highly discouraging for those trying to bring about needed change. On the other hand, shifting between incompatible change technologies creates frustration and lack of acceptable progress. Change technologies that are “process improvement” based often lack the systemic vitality needed to effectively change an organizations cultural capacity. These two technologies are incompatible although they can work in harmony when applied to separate issues, they rarely work well in tandem.

E. Receptivity to “Cultural Facilitation” as a Prime Change Methodology. In organizations governed primarily by the use of specific centrally-vested authority, it may be difficult for people to shift toward “Cultural Facilitation” as the primary change methodology. Developing cultural capacity cannot be accomplished by dictum. Cultural capacity depends upon the discretionary elements of complex organization relationships above all else.

F. Receptivity to Deep Employee Involvement. Although an organizations leadership and management play a central role in letting cultural capacity develop they cannot make it develop. At best they can create the environment within which capacity improves. The front-line soldiers that can make it happen are those employees without legitimate authority – deep in the structure and eventually at all levels simultaneously. In many organizations where the central legitimate authority is more important or more traditional, it may be difficult to accept this methodology.

G. Levels of Urgency, Resource Availability, and Resolve. Three elements combine in this single condition to create “emphasis:” urgency, resource availability, and resolve.

1. A sense of urgency is critical to achieving and sustaining an acceptable pace. If the organization is under little or no pressure to improve capacity, gains will be lost when demands shift emphasis to other areas even temporarily.

2. Closely related is the degree to which necessary resources will be made available for the change effort. Developing capacity takes time, effort, and funding. If these necessary resources are too low on the priority list or suffer disproportionately from cutbacks, the results can be catastrophic.

3. Those engaged in the cultural capacity development efforts must share a clear and consistent resolve to achieve necessary gains or the anticipated results cannot be achieved. The thread of this resolve must run both the depth and breadth of legitimate and parallel organization structure to be effective.

H. Domain Considerations. *QWLC* specializes in a 24-7 community infrastructure domain – probably the most difficult domain within which to develop cultural capacity improvements because of the intense always-on-the-edge focus on resource concerns. If the client organization fits this domain profile advantages can accrue.

I. Ability and Routineness of Communicating with Workforce. The *QWLC* cultural capacity change methodology requires that each month a summary of improvement activities be reported to the workforce. This requirement demands that a mechanism be in place. Although newsletter or e-mail options may suffice, an in-person mechanism such as an all personnel meeting is best so that an interaction may occur. In-person communication is also better because it allows judgements to be made regarding difficult qualities such as sincerity and interest levels.

J. Access/Proximity. An ability for *QWLC* consultants to visit the organization on a routine basis is also important. Sustainment often requires quarterly involvement. If conditions do not allow this level of frequency because of access or proximity, the quality or effectiveness of remediation efforts may suffer.