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Cultural Facilitation

A. Purpose:

Cultural facilitation continuously realigns actual work culture with a desired work culture on three levels: organization Beliefs, Strategies, and Work Regimen.

B. Cultural Model Components:

The Leadagement Technologies New Behavioral View Model is used as one potential springboard to define an organization's culture. That model is diagnostic and remedial, and equally appropriate for individuals, teams, work groups, and organizations. This versatility makes it ideal for cultural applications.

The New Behavioral View Model addresses three significant components –

- ? Environmental/Situational Supra-system
- ? Major Cultural Sub-systems
- ? Cultural Sub-system Integrators

1. Environmental/Situational Supra-system. The culture of an element in any organization is influenced most strongly by the culture of the next higher-order. As an example, team culture is influenced most strongly by work group culture.

This next-higher-order is called the environmental or situational supra-system. Because the nature of culture is embedded (nested) in this manner, influence is exerted most strongly from the supra-system inward. Typically, the supra-system contains the authority to reward.

Often, people develop a tendency to either look inward (away from the supra-system) or outward (toward the supra-system). If these tendencies develop into habits or patterns, dysfunction may result. The best of scenarios enable people to look in both directions with equal query.

2. Major Cultural Sub-systems. Operating within a supra-system are four major cultural sub-systems.

a. Scan. The scan includes everything that can potentially influence people in the organization. It is like a large invisible container within which the organization and all its people work.

b. Focus. Focus limits attention to specific areas within a scan. This phenomena is familiar to anyone who has recently purchased a new car. For a brief period, the new owner tends to notice others driving the same kind of car as the one they just purchased.

c. Action. Actions are what you actually do. Actions are sensory based. There is visible evidence for action. Action carries with it the implications of feelings. It is during the action phase that cultural rapport is established – the culture “fits” – I am comfortable within.

d. Response. A response is twofold: our internal response to what is going on, and the external response we are exposed to that enables us to interpret. Both occur simultaneously. Often we expose, to others, our external response and hold our internal response more privately. This contributes to stress and incongruent behavior.

These four sub-systems are cyclical – interactive – dynamic.

3. Cultural Sub-system Integrators. There are six cultural sub-system integrators that transition through flow between the four major sub-systems.

a. Beliefs and Values (Scan to Focus). Beliefs and values transition what could be an influence to what is an influence.

b. Decision (Focus to Action). Decisions further limit focus by providing a transition to a specific action orientation.

c. Feed Forward (Focus to Action). Feed forward transitions my choices and decisions into actions.

d. Anticipation (Action to Response). Anticipation is a final cultural cross check that modifies action to enhance how others might respond to what I am doing.

e. Feedback (response to Scan). Feedback offers cues that confirm that actions have brought about the response desired.

f. Interpretation (Response to Scan). Interpretation allows input to the scan to fit the established categories.

C. Role of the Cultural Facilitator.

The cultural facilitator bridges the parallel organization structure with traditional leadership and management. The role of the cultural Facilitator is one of information agent and advocate.

The quality of facilitation services is attributable to successful experience and continuous improvement in four disciplines:

- ? Graphic
- ? Exchanges
- ? Process
- ? Coaching
- ? Group
- ? Culture

D. Cultural Facilitation Initiatives.

Cultural facilitators are expected to take the initiative in the four primary areas described below. Efforts are normally coordinated and synchronized by a central resource that keeps a scheduling calendar and overall timeline to assure optimum productivity.

1. Facilitate Routine Meetings. Cultural Facilitators will engage their facilitation skills at routine meetings of the organization in an effort to improve the quality of information flow and decisions.

2. Facilitate Cultural Realignment. Cultural Facilitators will engage their skills in the following specific realignment activities:

a. Continuously Improve Skills. Cultural Facilitators will learn and continuously improve cultural facilitation techniques by attending special courses for this purpose. In addition, regularly scheduled events should provide added opportunity for learning and facilitation experience.

b. Conduct Realignment Reviews. Regular Belief Set, Strategy Bridge, and Work Regimen reviews ought to be formally conducted on an annual basis or anytime there is a significant change in leadership. Reviews consist of a methodical examination of all elements of alignment to determine the degree to which outcomes are being achieved.

c. Work Flow Diagramming. Cultural Facilitators assist in work process flow diagramming efforts to assure that resources are adequately devoted to the development of culture as a determined advantage in providing extraordinary customer service and achieving customer satisfaction.

d. Data Collection Link. Cultural Facilitators will construct and assist with the implementation of Data Collection and Feedback Plans. Cultural Facilitators will be in an excellent position to influence high rates of return and enhanced accuracy on surveys and similar collection efforts.

e. Cultural Facilitation Team. All Cultural Facilitators have a commitment to collaborate with other Cultural Facilitators to improve a coordinated effort, cross fertilize ideas and lessons learned, and strengthen their own support network.

f. Cultural Intervention. Cultural Facilitators must intervene at appropriate points (when there are negative cultural implications). Often, this may call for a tactful question or comment “in the moment” when it can do the most good – during a staff meeting, during a conversation, or even as a quick follow-through to an e-mail message.

g. Chart Cultural Implications. Advise a client of cultural implications of significant events before they occur to provide the best advantage of success.

h. Library. Maintaining a library of cultural facilitation materials (books, extracts, and articles) for use by coworkers is an ideal way to influence an organization. Often being able to distribute good on-time information can be a critical and very effective intervention.

i. Maintain Records. Cultural Facilitators would do well to maintain files of events and significant situations that will enable appropriate follow-through. This need not become a cumbersome task.

j. Perform Special Projects. The client or others may request that the cultural facilitator engage in a special project that has obvious cultural implications. An excellent example might be the orientation of new employees to the organization culture.

3. Facilitate Organizational Learning. The Realignment process can be confusing in the early stages to those who have not been involved on a team and have not had a chance to understand what a culture change means. Cultural Facilitators will engage their interpersonal skills and knowledge of the process to:

a. Stimulate Dialog. Stimulate dialog about realignment, culture, and/or decisions to create learning opportunities.

b. Distribute Literature. Distribute literature related to the issues, concerns, and solutions that are part of the process. (*QWLC* will provide some of that, other materials may be available through personal reading, etc.)

4. Facilitate Cultural Measurements. Any improvement effort will be enhanced and be more likely to succeed if accurate measurements of progress are made so that decision makers can be apply efforts directly to the high priority areas. The Cultural Facilitator is the closest “on scene” qualified resource available to the client for diagnostic work. Cultural facilitators must be involved in continuous measurement projects from the start.

a. Inventories. Measurement of individual indicators of performance – Inventories, is an ideal way for the organization to keep trace of what is going on.

b. Surveys. Cultural Facilitators might measure an organization, work group, and team capacity using organizational surveys.

