



TAPMI NURTURING WEALTH CREATOR SERIES

Building Learning Organisations - Four Trigger Points

By Anuradha Rangan

Form follows function. Strategy follows structure. culture follows form. This has been the historical sequencing of strategy, structure and culture. Once the CEO of an enterprise defines the objectives or goals of the organisation with clarity, the design architects will develop an organisational chart with precise role clarity. These two aspects will facilitate internal work culture. While strategy and structure are considered as inputs, culture is a process. Culture emanates from the values, beliefs, and practices of an individual and the group. It comprises the mindset, competencies and capabilities of people and also relate to the collective commitment of people to the common goal.

Along with the renaissance of business strategy, re-engineering and restructuring modes, culture also has undergone tremendous transformation. Currently four learning culture principles are widely propagated and practiced by organisations across sectors. These are Shared Vision, Systems Thinking, Core Competencies, and Agility.

Trigger 1: Shared Vision

In their book *Built to Last*, Collins and Porras explain organisational vision as consisting of two components - Core Ideology and Envisioned Future. Core ideology is the enduring characteristics of an organisation that remains consistent through time and transcends product/market life cycles, technological breakthrough, management fads and individual leaders. Core ideology provides the bonding glue that holds an organisation together as it grows, decentralizes, diversifies, expands globally and attains diversity within. The envisioned future is a paradoxical component that is a futuristic dream, hope and fantasy.

Trigger 2: Systems Thinking

According to Peter Senge from his book *Fifth Discipline*, the holistic perspective mental models and systematic learning habits have to be designed and

practiced religiously if an enterprise wishes to align with the changing external business environment. Senge says that business and other human endeavours are sets of systems, bound by invisible fabrics of interrelated activities.

Trigger 3: Core Competencies

According to C.K. Prahalad, author of *Core Competence*, if any business is to be profitable and the employees to benefit, the re-engineering should begin with clear charter of relevant competencies at each and every level. This idea gained momentum during the 1990s, with the emergence of globalisation and the anxiety for survival of organisations. It also aligned with the knowledge workplaces where everyone is a profit centre and is having the core talent and skill.

Trigger 4: Agility

Michel Hammer, the author of *Re-engineering the Corporation* suggests twelve action points to business managers, focusing on developing complete adaptable potential. To make the organisation acceptable to the customers, he insists that process must be the crux. Agility of the mind is possible only when high performance with ease is provided inside organisations. Institutionalising change and integrating virtually are the two key points for healthy learning cultures.

It is imperative that all four triggers prevail in balance. Sharing of knowledge and information about Building a Learning Organisation amidst academicians and practitioners has boosted the transformation process of old organisations and provided clues and confidence to new business entrepreneurs to build their enterprises in a holistic manner.

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