



WHAT DOES “GOOD” LOOK LIKE IN AN ORGANIZATION?

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If you are an executive or CEO and responsible for a large organization, and, if you are of the opinion that you’ll know what’s “good” when you see it, then you will find the following check-off points very useful. These quick checks allow the process of assessing an organization for its effectiveness to be conducted with a level of sophistication and skill that sometimes eludes busy executives. Your organization’s assessment process can be informed by using this method that combines gathering needed data with reflection about organizational processes. When I work with clients (CEOs and executives in the business, health care and education arenas), I call these points “Blair’s Blasting Best,” or, alternatively, “The G.O.! Quotient.” To be known as a well-functioning, GO! organization you will need to be able to respond well to the following points.

Point One – You and your organization need a strategic plan. Don’t listen to the current nay-sayers who argue against planning – these folks simply don’t have a firm understanding of what planning is and of the role that it plays in organizations. For your organization to work well, you need to have engaged, annually, in a solid planning process with your leadership team, and with your Board of Directors, if you have one. The leadership team and Board planning sessions need to be carried out in separate processes, beginning with a strategic briefing with the leadership team; then moving to full-blown planning with the Board, for mission and goals identification; and returning to a concentrated planning exercise with the leadership team, for the setting out of objectives and action plans. This process must be repeated annually for maximum effectiveness and benefit to the organization.

Point Two – You need to understand your employees. Once annual planning has been completed, you need to know and understand who it is that you have working for you, and you need to know the specific capabilities of these employees. Why is this so?



Because, if you have developed ambitious plans for the future (ones that will move the organization along), and do not have the employee complement to carry out the work, those plans will surely fail (and so will you). Professional skills/abilities assessments of employees should be conducted at least once every two years, as even the stable employee workforce will undergo changes of preference and interest and this important information needs to be captured and understood.

Point Three – You need to have courage. The courage to take appropriate actions based upon the information gained from Point One (a roadmap for the future, i.e., the strategic plan) and Point Two (a geographical survey of the landscape, i.e., the personnel complement) must be drawn upon in the third stage of the planning process.

Orchestrating the acquiring/inquiring information (planning and assessing) requires a completely different skill set, on your part, from that of mobilizing for action. Acquiring information and data is a relatively passive activity, but mobilizing to put your new knowledge into action is very different and requires considerable courage and determination, or what Rosabeth Moss Kanter calls “confidence.” As well, it requires a consistent commitment of courage and associated risk-taking by your leadership team and by your Board of Directors.

Point Four – You will need to exercise judgment. You will need to select the best ways of learning of the results that you produce, once you’ve put the plan into action. This stage calls for an honest and technical evaluation of your efforts and of the results of those efforts. A good evaluative process is essential; otherwise, you’ll not be able to judge whether what you’ve been doing has been worthwhile. You will need to seek out either someone who is on your staff, or, if that position does not exist in your organization, then the services of a consultant. (Evaluators are trained researchers, but with an organizational/programmatic orientation versus the laboratory focus of the researcher.) Ask the evaluator to design a thorough process to assess and chronicle your recent work. It is very important to deal well with the evaluation process – it offers a very valuable ability to demonstrate to boards, stock holders, and other “primaries” that the efforts that you’ve been devoting your time to are bearing fruit. Of course, there’s always the chance that they are not. If this is so, you definitely want to know that. You want to “own” it; and you certainly want to be able to explain it and to offer suggestions for corrective actions.



Point Five – You will need to gain understanding of the cyclical nature of a good organization. You start with the planning process each year, and you can also end the year with a planning process, as the kick-off for the next year. The information from the evaluation (Point Four) provides the data for the initiation of the next planning cycle. A regular cycle of planning might sound like “drudge” work to you, but it actually represents the efforts of the organization and its individuals – and “human work” is what you, as the organization’s leader, are to be about! Leaders and managers in organizations who believe that they are to focus on “my people and the organization,” yet overlook the planning formalities of the organization are shortchanging themselves as well as their people. In ignoring planning, leaders fail to realize that they are ignoring the planning of the human elements of the organization.

In conducting the planning process, outlined in Points One-Five, you’ll be able to clearly determine what “good” is to look like in your organization.

For your “Good Organization” [“GO!”] Quotient, contact the Leading and Learning, Inc. offices to obtain your questionnaire: 951/699-2381.

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