

Organisation Maturity Diagnosis (Background)

The requirements of a fully integrative diagnostic/developmental model can be outlined as follows:

1. An integrative modeling of learning along which all human systems can be measured
2. Dimensions of the system that can be analysed for their stage of learning development or functioning
3. A framework derived from the elements and the growth stages that portray discreet levels of functioning across the system in a manner that is graphic, comprehensive and easy to understand
4. A methodology to diagnose the learning stages at which the dimensions of the system are functioning and being reinforced
5. Stage-by-stage developmental guidance for growth along all functioning so that traction can be maintained through the implementation of a growth strategy
6. Guidance to the levels where self-sustainability takes hold
7. A framework that relates not just to discreet interventions but to ongoing long-run strategic growth
8. A model that places organization-development on a strategic long-run footing in organizations rather than the short-run disjointed footing it has today driven by the emergence of solutions
9. An approach that re-enforces organization development as an overarching paradigm for the HRM function and discipline

For every organisation the goal is to achieve sustainable competitive advantage, and there is neither an objective way of telling if an organisation is systemically on a valid growth path to achieving this stage of development, nor even any way of telling whether it has been achieved. The proposed framework addresses both needs, and proposes to offer guidance to organisations towards sustainable competitive advantage and leadership levels of functioning.

Insofar as an organization is a collective of people interacting to a common purpose that has arisen to solve problems through information processing and collective planned activities and they must improve, adapt, be creative and continuously learn to compete, and survive and/or prosper, then, form a normative perspective, we must analyse its maturity or generic fitness for purpose in terms of its quality of learning. Improving collective cognition involves learning, and successful organizations are operating at a higher level of learning than unsuccessful ones. Obviously, the more complex an intervention is, the higher is the required level of learning for the intervention to gain traction. The requirement is to guide the raising of an organization's learning to the levels that can generate and sustain leadership, and in the case of discreet organization-development interventions, to raise learning levels to where the interventions will gain traction.

There is little that is relatively new in this model, except that it mostly organizes disparate applications of learning theory in an integrative and practically applicable framework. Much of the construct validity of the framework relies on this fact that most of its constituent stages are well researched under various guises and paradigms.

FRAMEWORKS FOR BUSINESS & ORGANISATION STRATEGIES

- GROWTH
- TURNAROUND
- M & A
- INNOVATION
- COLLABORATION
- TEAM-DEVELOPMENT
- BENCHMARKING

Continuum of organization Maturity

At one end of the spectrum we have the highly intelligent organic organization that continually innovates and adapts to maintain a leadership position in their segment and maximize value for stakeholders. These are learning organization's with strong values and collaborative behaviors.

At the other end of the spectrum is an organization in the critical zone which may have lost all inertia internally and will fail unless there is an intervention to create inertia.



The diagnostic tool simply measures each dynamic construct for its stage of functioning. Averaging the results for each construct gives a score for each dynamic. Fig. 1 shows the Diagnostic Matrices with a profile of an organisation that will be discussed later. Each point of the matrix of each construct is a descriptive term for functioning associated with each stage for each construct. These terms provide the basis for both a question for the diagnosis of whether it applies to the construct, and an instruction for the attainment of that level of functioning from the stage beneath. The resultant instructions yield step-by-step intervention planning for use throughout the system to achieve levels of functioning that can eventually achieve and sustain competitive advantage.

The following paragraphs present a very brief generic outline of each stage and phase of the model which are graphically represented in Table 4 in the Appendix. These stages are presented in ascending order of adaptive integration. The tables graphically represent a great deal of the validation argument for the model from its psycho-physiological correlate, stage descriptions, correlation with other models, etc. The following chapters give introductions to the model as depicted in the tables.

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LEVEL 1: INERTIA

The proposed framework affords considerable clarity to the concept of psychological inertia which has continued to be extremely loosely defined. From a psychological perspective this is a level of functioning that is devoid of constructive drive, and signals a system that needs external influence to achieve movement, progress or growth in its environment. This level is divided into 3 stages: the first describes a stage where the System, Dynamic or Construct is a drain on the emotional or collateral resources of its supra-system; the next when it is internally inactive and effectively dead in terms of relating to its supra-system; and the latter when it is internally constructively active, but the activity is isolated from its supra-system; these stages are called Gravitation, Core Inertia and Insulation, respectively.

LEVEL 2: CHAOS

In general, the lowest levels of learning have been somewhat neglected in modern paradigmatic shifts and relate to the response patterns associated with Tropism and the Reflex. Again, modern treatments of reflexive and tropistic human behaviour lack a coherence which the proposed framework provides. In these stages, we are describing a responsiveness that may be adaptive in short-term situations but that typically lead over time to disassociation and/or systemic executive deficit. In terms of theoretical construction, these levels represent different types of chaotic behaviour. Reflexive patterns are determined by multiple internal or external organising centres, while the stage of Tropism is determined by one organising centre, or a singularity.



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CollaborationIP is the trade name for the commercial version of the collaboration framework & solution

LEVEL 3: EQUILIBRIUM

Organizations can be described as operating in a state of equilibrium when they are operating within habituated parameters, and they will survive as long as change in demand from the environment is within the ranges to which they have habituated. Once that relationship is breached between environment and system, the system either deteriorates to the levels of chaos already described, or they harness their internal capacity for growth. For organizations, this internal capacity is dependent on some disquiet in equilibrium (either brought in or latent) to move the system into learning mode. A diagnostic tool must clearly be able to distinguish between equilibrium that is at ease with itself and its niche, and one that displays this albeit ineffective internal drive for change, and these stages are called Stable Equilibrium and Unstable Equilibrium.

DISINTEGRATIVE DIVISION OF THE MODEL

The one problem that typifies all human systems habitually functioning at the levels described so far, is that no effective or integrative learning takes place. In a sub-learning organization, an individual will simply not receive any real training or structural reinforcement of any new skills; and in such a family, nor will a child receive any real re-enforcement to study or achieve beyond habituated socio-economic patterns. Tinkering with cheap and cheerful training is simply Reflexism, and arresting advantage through deference to a leader is Tropism. Tropistic leaders with typically A-Type personalities, tend towards the “5-easy-steps” approach to learning. It is critical to point out that people and organisations can be perceived by knowledgeable people to be functioning at very high levels, when definitively they are sub-integrative and even close to disintegration. If a system has been diagnosed as operating at sub-integrative levels, there will be no traction for change or learning interventions. Therefore, all sub-learning systems must revert to as low a stage as possible to gain optimal traction for the processes of change and development. Ideally, this means beginning at the bottom with a shedding of whatever is draining energy or resources, incubating a new vision with an outline plan, achieving the first critical relationship, diversifying, and filling in the strategic requirements for full attainment of the mission or life-purpose.

The next level of strategic activities must concern the skilling of people and equipping the system with what is needed to fulfill the strategy chosen in an integrative Equilibrial Stage. This level is called Learning.

LEVEL 4: LEARNING

Learning is defined as “change in behaviour as a result of experience”. One of the critical components of change in organization-development or personal-development is traction. It is obvious that there are many change interventions that do not achieve traction. Therefore, the Learning level has two stages: one where learning takes hold, or is congruent with a valid emerging strategy and developmental or adaptive change arises; and a lesser level that describes functioning where efforts to improve or develop are not part of a viable plan or result in error, frustration, etc., or piecemeal rather than fully integrative adaptation. Because of the accepted definition for learning, these stages cannot be simply called *Change* and *Learning*, so they are called Adjustive Learning and Adaptive Learning



LEVEL 5: COMPLEXITY

To constructively integrate learning from different areas of life or different functions of an organization and apply that learning in order to adapt in an on-going manner to a changing environment involves complexity.

Human beings have long been labelled as complex-adaptive creatures because, as a species we can change to accommodate or adapt to and compete with what other individuals are developing or devising. However, if a system wishes to sustain that capacity it must move to a higher level of integration by incorporating the appropriate learning principles, processes, connections, etc. This differentiation calls for distinctive stages called *Complex Adaptivity* and *Adaptive Complexity*, which are called Competitiveness and Sustained Competitiveness in the organizational model.

LEVEL 6 CREATIVITY

Creativity for both individuals and organisations is not a matter of being radically new or innovative but being systemically and directly responsive at an executive level. Up until now, the system's output is strategically shaped by external dictates. At the level of creativity, the system has internalised enough process, procedure and competence, and is connected enough internally and externally, that it is capable generating its own unique responses to the environment. In keeping with the formatting of other levels, sustainability of this level of functioning is a matter of whether it is really systematised or not, in which case the creative advantage can "walk out the door". The lesser stage of integration is called Complex Creativity, and the higher stage is called Creative Complexity, which for organizations translates into Competitive Advantage and Sustainable Competitive Advantage respectively.

LEVEL 7: LEADERSHIP

There are three times in the framework's stage structure that the system exhibits singularity: Gravitation, Tropism and also Leadership where the system becomes a creative organizing centre for its supra-system. In the case of the individual, they become a patriarchal or matriarchal stability zone in their family and extended family; for the organization this level implies taking charge of the market curve and directing the market in a mutually constructive manner. Again, as with all singularities, there is the risk of catastrophic failure. For any organization that has traversed all phases, one might think that graceful degradation might mean falling from one level to the next, and by corollary, the system moves to sustainable leadership to the degree to which it can systematically re-vitalise its phases along all constructs.

