GUIDE TO

MANAGING CHANGE

FOR

URBAN MANAGERS

AND TRAINERS

HS/151/89E
ISBN: 92-1-131 0077-6

FOREWORD

Effective urban management is needed all over the world, but scarcity of resources and a rapid rate of urban growth make this need most pressing in developing countries. Rapid change and the necessity of "doing more with less" require especially competent urban managers. To assist member countries in responding to this challenge, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) has been offering, during the past decade, a variety of training programmes directed at closing the principal skill gaps and at promoting new approaches, methods and techniques.

Subjects covered by these programmes, usually implemented jointly with national training institutions and with assistance of agencies such as Economic Development Institute (EDI) of the World Bank or the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), can be divided into two main groups: (a) specific techniques and methods in areas such as urban local government revenue generation, budgeting, expenditure control or project preparation; and (b) general management and organizational development skills needed by urban managers. Strengthening of training in both areas is urgently needed, but the lack of training materials seems to be particularly pressing in the second - general management and organizational development for urban managers. This publication is an attempt to fill this gap.

The Guide to Managing Change for Managers and Trainers have been developed by Dr. Fred Fisher, Director, International Development Institute for Organization and Management (IDIOM), in collaboration with the training staff of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat). Dr. Fisher has had many years of experience as a city manager, training executive, management adviser and university professor. The Guide has been tested during training courses in Africa and Asia directed by Dr. Fisher for UNCHS (Habitat) in collaboration with USAID and EDI.

Dr. Arcot Ramachandran
Under-Secretary-General
Executive Director
United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

This *Guide for Managing Change,* as you can see from the cover, is directed to two distinct audiences, urban managers and trainers. No, it's not a mistake. We believe both of these professionals can benefit from reading and using this Guide. It is designed and written to help others learn about the management process and to develop skills in applying the overall strategy and individual tactics to problems and opportunities in organization and community settings. Given these objectives, the Guide is a valuable addition to tool kits of both local government managers and trainers.

Since the use of this Guide by trainers is more obvious than its use by managers, let's look first at how it might be used by managers. Senior managers are in a key position to help their subordinate management staff members learn through doing. When middle managers and supervisors are allowed to carry out their roles and responsibilities without the benefit of systematic learning about what they are doing, how they are doing it, and the consequences of their actions, they are denied the opportunity to experience personal and professional growth - and to contribute more effectively to the goals and objectives of the organization. "But", you ask, "how can this Guide help me, as a local government manager, carry out a training role in my organization?"

First, you and your management team can use the Guide as a resource for learning more about the management process, more specifically, how you can manage the change process within your own organization. This can be as simple as convening a weekly staff meeting where you conduct a guided discussion about the various steps in the change process as outlined in the Guide.

From my own perspective of someone who has been both a local government manager and trainer, this discussion approach is a bit too passive. More interesting and productive is the use of the Guide to engage in team building, problem solving, project planning or organizational development opportunities. Many of the learning events in the Guide are designed to help managers carry out these kinds of staff activities.

If you haven't incorporated staff training and development into your role as a local government manager, you may find the idea of doing this a bit daunting. Or, you may feel you have not been doing something you should be doing. Not to worry. Many managers, in the past, have not seen staff training, or human resource development, as a direct senior management responsibility. The attitude toward the role of learning facilitator for the manager is changing rapidly. With momentous chance such a given in most organizations and their working environments, we can hardly ignore the need for continuous learning on the job. More importantly, most organizations have such a dearth of middle and supervisory management capacity that responsible senior managers must consider ways to grow their own management talent, in-house and on-the-job.

As for becoming a competent learning facilitator (or someone who helps some one else learn largely through their own initiative and effort), it has been my experience that the competent manager can become a competent trainer, if they aren't already. Furthermore, the Guide is designed to make the learning facilitation task as easy as possible. We will come back to how to use the Guide in a moment but now, let me say a word or two about the trainers who are contemplating the use of this Guide for Managing Change.

The Guide offers opportunities for management trainers to operate in a variety of different modes. While the materials in this workbook can be used in a more traditional classroom mode, you will discover they are really more action oriented than the usual management text. While it includes the usual concepts and strategies that define the management process, there are many exercises (what we call experiential designs) to help the trainer and trainees (or manager and management team) apply these concepts and strategies to real problems and work situations. There are also training notes that suggest different ways for the learning facilitator to use the materials, either in the classroom or on the job.

As a trainer, I have used the learning designs in this Guide in a variety of ways. For example, I have conducted two-week residential workshops for senior managers who were each asked to bring a problem statement and data about the problem with them to the workshop. These problem statements, when applied to the problem diagnosis-solving cycle of events outlined in the Guide, became case studies from which everyone learned, including me! I've also used the concepts and strategies in the Guide to: help managers take a structured look at their organization and how it is operating; engage in management team building (resulting in better working relationships among key officers); and help management teams carry out action planning for new projects.

These kinds of training interventions are both exciting and productive because they engage the learners in a process, which is reality based and the fruits of the learning immediately evident - and usable.

To reiterate these opening remarks, the Guide is designed to meet the needs of both local government managers and trainers who work with local governments. They include concepts and strategies about the managing change process, a variety of exercises and experiential ideas on how to apply the conceptual materials to the experiences of the trainees and their work environment, and trainer notes on how to plan, implement and manage the various training events.

Before looking at some underlying assumptions and values about the learning process and training, as a management strategy, let me reassure both the urban manager and trainer that this kind of training rarely fails. While the training may be conducted at varying degrees of competence (meaning some learning facilitators are better than others and some groups of training participants are more committed and active than others), it is reassuring to know that this kind of action oriented, client centered, performance based training is almost always successful.

Some underlying assumptions and values

The training materials in this Guide are based on certain assumptions and values held by the author. Some are based on conventional wisdom about how organizations operate, managers manage and learners learn. Others are, perhaps, less common to the reader's understanding of these processes, or experiences with them.

Let's look briefly at some of these underlying assumptions and values.

(a) The most effective learning experience involves theory, practice and the opportunity to relate the theory and practice to the participant's own work setting experiences. The concepts and theories are either preceded or followed by opportunities to test or reflect upon them in some structured way, based upon the participants' own management and organizational experiences.

(b) The effectiveness of the training experience is optimised when the trainer can combine knowledge enhancement, skill building attitudinal change and help the trainee emerge from the training with a "product." The product can be an action plan to be taken home for implementation or a problem solved, in one way or another, using the knowledge and skills gained in the workshop.

(c) The learning experience is not successful if it fails to tap the knowledge and experiences of those involved in the training. This means the trainer must plan time for considerable interaction among the training participants. Most trainers programme too many activities or information for dissemination into too short a period of time. The trainer should leave enough time in the design for the participants to share ideas and experiences as well as time to reflect upon them.

(d) Adult learners not only need time to reflect upon their experiences but stimulation to do so. The trainer's role is to create opportunities and stimulants for reflection. You will note as you use these materials that they include a number of questionnaires (instruments) to help the participant look at his or her own experience within the work setting (organization) in a systematic way.

(e) If you do not like the way the materials are designed, you should feel free to change them. In fact, you should feel an obligation to change any training design so it will work for you and your participants.

(f) The effective trainer is someone who can work with a minimum of training techniques, trusting that the participants will take responsibility for their own learning.

(g) The bottom line in management training is behavioural change. Some trainers get nervous about this assertion - but think about it for a moment. If the workshop participant (manager) does not behave differently when he or she gets back on the job, the training experience and investment have been wasted.

Action research and management

The training materials that follow are organized into two broad categories. The first is “Action research and planning” - a systematic process designed to help the participants sharpen their decision making and problem-solving skills. Most managers are not as proficient as they could be in making decisions and solving problems. The Action Research and Planning sessions are designed to address deficiencies in managerial skills and performance. They are covered in **Part I** of the Guide.

The second category of topics is much broader, more eclectic and less systematic as presented. They are designed to help the individual participant reflect upon his or her own experiences as a manager and to increase their understanding and appreciation of the complexity of contemporary organizations. These training materials are included in **Part II** of the Guide. **Part III** is short. It includes only one learning event, *Planning Reentry.* This module is designed to help bridge the gap between the learning experiences this Guide provides and the task of going back into the organization and picking up the reins of responsibility.

These two broad categories ("Action research and planning" and reflective topics) provide a juxtaposition of practical skill-building sessions and more reflective, philosophical, conceptual matters that engulf the work setting. By playing one off against the other, it is possible to enhance the quality of the learning experience.

In each of the sessions, it is also important for the trainer to focus attention on the individual and group work habits of the participants. If the training participants are being unproductive, disruptive, or engaged in other types of non-learning behaviour, it is important to help them understand their behaviour. More often than not, such behaviour mirrors their own work styles. By ignoring such behaviour, we tend to give it legitimacy, thus reinforcing it. Management courses should provide opportunities to increase individual awareness of page unproductive behaviour and explore alternative approaches to becoming more effective as a manager and organizational team member.

Individual and small group work sessions provide opportunities to highlight various attitudes and behaviours that reflect the reality of the work place environment. The trainer's challenge is to help the participants recognise these attitudes and behaviours and devise alternatives to overcome the negative ones and reinforce those that are positive.

Having options as a measure of success

It has been said that effective management is having options. Without options, it is doubtful whether the manager, in fact, can manage. He or she may, under those circumstances, react only to the inevitable.

Effectiveness in training is also dependent upon having options, particularly if we believe training or human resource development, is a serious venture in the processes of nation and organizational capacity building.

The Guide To Managing Change For Urban Managers and Trainers is designed to help managers and trainers become more proficient in creating their own options and, therefore, becoming more effective and competent in performing their individual roles. To illustrate this point, we would encourage those who use this Guide to think about the many options that are available to use these materials, both in the classroom and on-the-job. While there are options suggested in each of the training modules that follow, they only scratch the surface of what is possible. Having options is the sign of a competent manager. The same is true of those who help others learn.

A final author's note

The *Trainer's Notes,* preceding the *Concepts and Strategies* for each training session, have been written from my own personal experience. While some would argue that writing in the first person is unprofessional, I believe it is important to share some of my own experiences in using these materials over the years. Such personalization, I hope, will also send the signal that training is an individual effort and not subject to routinization. Each trainer needs to alter the materials and design to meet their own needs as well as those of the training participants.

PART I

INITIATING THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

The man who has ceased to learn ought not to be allowed to wander around loose in these dangerous days
M.M. COADY

Trainer's notes

Topic: Expectations exercise
Time required: 1 - 2 hours, depending upon number of participants

Most training sessions of more than three or four days can benefit from an initial exercise (after the opening session) to bring out the participants' expectations about the forthcoming training.

While this small group exercise on course expectations makes some people nervous, experience with it has been positive. The biggest problem can be the amount of time it takes. This one has been designed to be less time-consuming by using smaller groups that combine their expectations and report them as a small group. It begins the self-reflection process, prompting such questions as 'What is important for me to learn during this programme?" It also gives the trainer information for evaluating progress as the course proceeds.

In spite of its potential usefulness, if you do not feel comfortable using such an exercise, don't. However, it is often valuable to take some risks, to experiment. When I used this expectation exercise with a management team many years ago, it turned into a lengthy series of monologues about each member and his or her background. I was anxious when the discussion went far beyond the time allotted to it. When an attempt was made to hurry the participants along, they were very harsh with me. As it turned out, this management team had worked closely together but never really knew each other as persons. It was an opportunity they did not want to forfeit. As the team-building workshop progressed, it became clear that the time was well spent. Sometimes the group has to be trusted to say what is important and valuable to it - and the trainer needs to be responsive to their needs.

Tasks

1. Brief the total group on the exercise and ask each participant to spend 5-10 minutes responding to the statement "This management course will be a success for me personally if …."

2. As stated in the work sheet, groups of four to six should join together to discuss their individual responses and to put together a summary to report to the total group. Twenty minutes should be adequate but monitor the groups and time the session accordingly.

3. Bring the small groups together and have each group make a short presentation. As they progress from the first report, to the second, etc., group representatives should not repeat what has already been said by previous groups. This is a good time to start modelling effective group behaviour! Effective group behaviour includes putting a value on time as a scarce resource and how it can be used effectively.

4. Bring the session to a close by summarising what you see as key expectations and how the course is designed, or can be altered, to meet these expectations. If some expectations are clearly outside the realm of possibility, this is the time to say so. Many years ago at an executive course one person came to the course with only one goal in mind, to learn about zero based budgeting (ZBB)! ZBB was not on the agenda and no one else wanted it added as a topic for discussion. Luckily, it proved possible to locate a book on the subject and loan it to him. The trainer arranged to meet with him at a mutually convenient time to discuss the approach.

Exercise

Take a few moments and complete the following statement. This management course will be a success for me personally if:

____

____

____

When you have finished writing, join three to five others who are also finished and share with each other your criteria for a successful course. Be prepared, as a group, to summarise the most important criteria for making this time together productive and professionally rewarding. (Use the following space to summarise your small group's discussion).

____

____

____

Record in the following space the most important criteria to be applied to this course if it is to be successful in meeting the learning needs of you and your colleagues (based upon small group and plenary discussions).

____

____

____

THE URBAN MANAGEMENT CHALLENGE

The secret of managing is to keep the guys who hate you away from the guys who are un-decided
Casey Stengel

Trainer's notes

Topic: The urban management challenge
Time required: approximately 1 $^1/_2$ hours

The overall purpose of this session is to help the participants think about: (a) what it means to be effective either as a manager or an organization designed to serve specific audiences; and (b) the various factors that contribute to individual and organizational effectiveness. It is also a good icebreaker to help get participants into an experiential, interactive learning mode. (This exercise was designed to be used within an urban management course. If the participants you are working with represent a different work setting, change the exercise accordingly).

Tasks

1. Brief the total group on the rationale for the session and the tasks they are to perform.

2. Break total group into four smaller working groups of similar size. Two groups are to address the individual dimension of urban management and two groups the organizational dimension. All four groups will be requested to carry out two specific tasks:
   (a) To define "effectiveness" from either an individual or organizational perspective;
   (b) To list those factors they believe contribute to individual or organizational effectiveness.

3. Give each group newsprint and markers; they should have 30 minutes to complete the two tasks.

4. At the end of the 30 minutes bring the four groups together to report their results. Each group will have approximately 10 minutes to make their presentations when they return to the plenary discussion.

The trainer should ask each group to comment briefly on how they worked together as a team. How did they decide to address each task? Were they frustrated by the tasks and the way they worked together? If they had to do it again, would they address the tasks differently?

Compare, to the extent possible, the responses of the two groups working on the same tasks and the differences and similarities in respect to individual and organizational effectiveness.

Training outcomes should include:

a. A greater awareness of what is meant by "effectiveness"
b. What contributes to individual and organizational effectiveness
c. Whether or not the total group sees these two approaches to effectiveness as being fundamentally different or the same
d. Some discussion of the consequences of the exercise regarding their work together during the workshop (the "so what" factor).

Exercise
Topic: The Urban Management Challenge – Part I

Task assignment - Groups 1 and 2
Your group has two tasks to perform within the next 30 minutes.
Task 1: Agree on a definition of "Managerial Effectiveness" as it would apply to an urban situation.
Task 2: List those factors your group believes contribute to the manager's effectiveness.
Your group is free to use whatever method you believe will be effective in accomplishing the two tasks stated above.

Task assignment - Groups 3 and 4
Your group has two tasks to perform within the next 30 minutes.
Task 1: Agree on a definition of "Organizational Effectiveness" as it would apply to an urban situation.
Task 2: List those factors your group believes contribute to the organization's effectiveness.

Your group is free to use whatever method you believe will be effective in accomplishing the two tasks stated above.

Exercise
Topic: The Urban Management Challenge – Part II

Summarize, briefly, each group's definition of effectiveness.

Group 1: Managerial effectiveness

____

____

____

Group 2: Managerial effectiveness

____

____

____

Group 3: Organizational effectiveness

____

____

____

Group4: Organizational effectiveness

____

____

____

Exercise
Topic: The Urban Management Challenge – Part III

Summarize each group's list of factors, which they believe contribute to "Managerial Effectiveness".

Group 1	**Group 2**

Summarize each group's list of factors, which they believe contribute to "Organizational Effectiveness".

Group 3	**Group 4**

ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE: CONCEPTS AND STRATEGIES

There are only two choices in life: to accept things as they are or to take responsibility for changing them

Trainer's notes

Topic: Organizational change
Time required: approximately 1 hour

The following materials entitled, "Organizational Change: Concepts and Strategies", are designed to provide a theoretical basis for the follow-up sessions on action research and planning. It is suggested that you prepare a short 20-30 minute lecture based on the concepts and strategies outlined in the article and follow this by a general discussion. During the discussion, encourage the participants to talk about their own experiences in trying to bring about changes in their organizations. The more specific they can be, the more meaningful the discussion will be. Ask questions such as:

- Why was it so difficult to bring about the change?
- Was the change organization wide or confined to one department or project?
- What could have been done differently to have increased the effectiveness of the change?

Concepts and Strategies

The idea that organizations can "plan and manage change" has been a management theory and practice for many years. Management literature is infused with expressions like planned change, managing change, organizational change, change agents and, more recently, change masters. They are attempts to categorize and make available in usable forms a collection of theories, principles and practices about change and how it can be more effectively harnessed to serve the needs of organizations and their clients. The basic underlying assumption which fuels all the rhetoric and energy that goes into managing change is that, in fact, change can be managed. It is assumed that organizations, and their managers, can have more influence and control over the changes that are taking place in their midst. Organizational change, as a management
is assumed that organizations, and their managers, can have
more influence and control over the changes that are taking place in their midst. Organizational change, as a management
is assumed that organizations, and their managers, can have
more influence and control over the changes that are taking place in their midst. Organizational change, as a management
is assumed that organizations, and their managers, can have
more influence and control over the changes that are taking place in their midst. Organizational change, as a management
is assumed that organizations, and their managers, can have
more influence and control over the changes that are taking place in their midst. Organizational change, as a management
is assumed that organizations, and their managers, can have
more influence and control over the changes that are taking place in their midst. Organizational change, as a management
is assumed that organizations, and their managers, can have
more influence and control over the changes that are taking place in their midst. Organizational change, as a management
is assumed that organizations, and their managers, can have

as specific projects and programmes (end-products adhering to a prescribed cycle of planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating activities often imposed by outside institutions).

Because orientations to development are largely concerned with producing a final product or a future condition, opportunities to nurture individuals and organizations as agents of change are largely ignored. In fact, the concept of a change agent, within a specific organizational setting, may be antithetical to much of development in its present context. What is required, on the part of those who control the development process in developing countries, is a greater awareness of several fundamental issues integral to planned change.

First, the process of change is as important as the outcome of change. How change comes about, at all levels of society, will determine whether change can be sustained after external resources are no longer available.

Secondly, development involves many simultaneous changes including economic, social, political, cultural and behavioural. While it is readily admitted that economic, social and political changes are integral to the national development process, there is often reluctance to acknowledge that development also requires cultural and behavioural changes. Yet, cultural and behavioural changes may be the most critical factors in development and the most difficult to manage.

Thirdly, changes that result from development will be: (1) intended and unintended; (2) planned and unplanned; and (3) managed and unmanaged - even, on occasion, unmanageable. Managing change, as a function of development, should be designed to anticipate and minimize the unintended, unplanned and unmanaged aspects of development.

Finally, organizational change must be seen as a keystone of national development. Organizations, both public and private, are the places where development happens. Those who take on the responsibility to provide leadership and management within operating organizations should recognize their role in overall national development.

To summarize, the successful management of change and development will require clear attention to the process as well as the products of development and ultimately involve changes in the organization's culture and behaviour. Change will also involve unintended, unplanned and unmanaged events and consequences. The key to managing organizational change is to anticipate and minimize these events and their consequences to the extent possible.

Just because everything is different doesn’t mean anything has changed

Historical perspective

Organizational change, and the broader theme of managing change, have a well documented history. The following is a brief review of the roots of planned change and how they grew.

While there have been major practitioners and writers of managing change concepts and strategies over the centuries, the focus here is on one individual who has had a major influence on much of what we know about managing change at the present time. This person is Kurt Lewin, a social scientist who emigrated to the United States of America in the early 1930s.

At the core of Lewin's concerns was the challenge of bringing about attitudinal and behavioural change without the usual manipulation that underlies many of these effects.

At least five of Lewin's research interests and contributions have found their way into contemporary organizations and form the basis for much of modem management theory and practice. These include:

a. The role of democratic leadership in non-political settings including the sharing of power, authority, responsibility and decision making at all appropriate levels of organizations and societies;
b. Group dynamics (human relations) and their impact upon the effectiveness of individuals and teams in task-oriented settings;
c. Experiential learning (learning by doing) as an approach to developing skills and changing attitudes and behaviours;
d. Action research, as a practical decision-making and problem-solving process;
e. The analysis of forces at work within and among social systems - an important contribution to the concept of organizations as open systems. Open systems are those that are influenced by, and in turn influence, their external environment.

These five major themes in the management of complex socio-economic/political systems (usually known as organizations or institutions) did not always fall on fertile ground in the years following Lewin's initial research and writings. In fact, it has taken decades for the combination of Lewin's efforts and contributions to make their mark on a significant number of operating organizations.

The period from 1950 to the present has been fertile with the blossoming of new ideas and approaches to management. Those who have followed and, on occasion, immersed themselves in the latest management fad have witnessed the rise and fall, or at least, the faltering of such movements as sensitivity training the managerial grid, organization development, system analysis, team building matrix management, operations research, sociotechnical systems, management by objectives (MBO), worker democracy, The One Minute Manager, and many more. Management theorists have experienced their own "green revolution" when it comes to planting new approaches to effective management and organizations. The problem arises at harvest time when it is often difficult to tell the maize from the weeds.

On a more positive note

While it is easy and sometimes appropriate to administer a dose of healthy cynicism to the probing and flailing that has characterized management/organization theory and practice in recent years, one must also applaud the tenacious manner in which managers and theoreticians have struggled to find "a better way".

Those who come from harder disciplines (science, engineering economics) often scoff at the "softness" of management techniques and strategies. However, their attempts to rationalize and quantify the workings of complex organizations often demonstrate a naivete about management and have at times resulted in disastrous consequences.

Unfortunately, the management of complex organizations is a messy business. It is fraught with ambiguity and uncertainty. It is also constrained by outmoded theories and practices, which were devised in a previous century. Most of the world's formal organizations cling to Weber's bureaucratic model. It is characterized by the hierarchical pyramid, the definition and assignment of specific work tasks, sharp distinctions between workers and managers, and formalized and rigid patterns of organizational behaviour and practices.

When it is realised that these managerial and organizational systems are undergirded, and often undermined, by a rich tradition of local culture or cultures, it is little wonder that there are many questions and few answers about how one should go about managing organizations, projects, programmes and services in societies and multi-societal settings that are rapidly changing.

For those who are charged with the task of "managing", this rich contextual stew of concepts and techniques can be of little comfort. The real challenge of management is learning to live temporarily with the inherited "system" while beginning to change it so it works for the manager, and not against him in carrying out the responsibilities of the position.

Planned change strategies - the high road

Before bringing this discussion to a close it would be well to include a brief look at: (a) an academic categorisation of planned change strategies that has been generally accepted over the years; and (b) a more practical set of change techniques designed for the manager.

One widely accepted academic taxonomy of planned change strategies is by Robert Chin and Kenneth Benne. It includes three broad categories: (a) empirical-rational; (b) normative-re-educative; and (c) power-coercive.

Empirical-rational. This approach assumes that individuals are rational and follow their rational self-interests once these are revealed to them. It further assumes that decisions can be made from a data base which adheres to rational arguments and provides a strong semblance of predictability. This approach includes basic and applied research and the dissemination of knowledge through general education, administrative decisions based on merit or recognized standards, systems analyses and operations research as management tools for decision-making and the installation and use of quantitative informational systems to guide management actions.

Normative-re-educative. This category of change strategies assumes that patterns of action and practice are supported by socio-cultural norms and by commitments on the part of individuals to these norms. These strategies do not deny rational thought but go beyond rationality in determining what influences commitments and behaviour. It assumes the capacity to unlearn old norms, values, attitudes and behaviours and to learn new ones. It further assumes a transactional relationship between the individual and his or her environment. This approach includes many of Lewin's early efforts, such as experiential training and action research, individual development approaches such as psychotherapy, counselling and coaching and organizational activities designed to foster growth of individuals and the problem-solving capabilities of the system, through such activities as team-building and organization development.

Power-coercive. This approach to change assumes the application of power in some form, political or otherwise. The influence process involved is one of compliance by those with less power to the plans, direction and leadership of those with greater power. This category of change strategies includes: the use of political institutions; the composition and manipulation of power élites; non-violent confrontation as employed by Gandhi and Martin Luther King; conflict management; economic sanctions; and the making of power coalitions.

To these three categories of change strategies, proposed by Chin and Benne, a fourth might be added - that of technological-structural change. While Chin and Benne would, no doubt, argue that their three categories encompass changes of a technological and structural nature, these are too important in today's managerial environment to risk being lost under the trilogy of approaches listed above.

Technological-structural. These changes assume the infusion of new technology into systems and their environment and the alteration or re-ordering of social systems to achieve certain goals. Included under this category are such activities as: the installation of computers; the deployment of new equipment and materials; and the structural alteration of organizational relationships.

From the theoretical to the practical

French and Bell, in their book Organization Development, provide a succinct look at the major families of types of organizational change interventions. These are strategies designed to help managers put into practice many of the concepts associated with planned change:

a. **Diagnostic activities:** fact-finding activities designed to ascertain the state of the system, the status of a problem, the “way things are”. Available methods range from projective devices like “build a collage that represents for you your place in this organization” to the more traditional data collection methods of interviews, questionnaires, surveys, and meetings.

b. **Team-building activities:** activities designed to enhance the effective operation of system teams. They may relate to task issues, such as the way things are done, the needed skills to accomplish tasks, the resource allocations necessary for task accomplishment; or they may relate to the nature and quality of the relationships between the team members or between members and the leader. Again, a wide range of activities is possible. In addition, consideration is given to the different kinds of teams that may exist in the organization, such as formal work teams, temporary task force teams, and newly constituted teams.

c. **Intergroup activities:** activities designed to improve effectiveness of interdependent groups. They focus on joint activities and the output of the groups considered as a single system rather than two subsystems. When two groups are involved, the activities are generally designated intergroup or interface activities; when more than two groups are involved, the activities are often called organizational mirroring.

d. **Survey-feedback activities:** related to and similar to the diagnostic activities mentioned above in that they are a large component of those activities. However, they are important enough in their own right to be considered separately. These activities center on actively working the data produced by a survey and designing action plans based on the survey data.

e. **Education and training activities:** activities designed to improve the skills, abilities, and knowledge of individuals. There are several activities available and several approaches possible. For example, the individual can be educated in isolation from his or her own work group (in a T-group comprised of strangers), or one can be educated in relation to the work group (when a work team learns how better to manage interpersonal conflict). The activities may be directed toward technical skills required for effective task performance or maybe directed toward improving interpersonal competence. The activities may be directed toward leadership issues, responsibilities and functions of group members, decision making, problem solving, goal setting and planning, etc.

f. **Techno-structural or structural activities:** activities designed to improve the effectiveness of technical or structural inputs and constraints affecting individuals or groups. The activities may take the form of: (i) experimenting with new organization structures and evaluating their effectiveness in terms of specific goals; or (ii) devising new ways to bring technical resources to bear on problems. Included in these activities are certain forms of job enrichment, management by objectives, socio-technical systems, collateral organizations, and physical settings interventions.

g. **Process consultation activities:** activities on the part of the consultant "which help the client perceive, understand, and act upon process events which occur in the client's environment." These activities perhaps more accurately describe an approach, a consulting mode in which the client is given insight into the human processes in organizations and taught skills in diagnosing and managing them. Primary emphasis is on processes such as communications, leader and member roles in groups, problem-solving and decision-making, group norms and group growth, leadership and authority, and intergroup co-operation and competition. Emphasis is also placed upon learning how to diagnose and develop the necessary skills to be effective in dealing with these processes.

h. **Third party peacemaking activities:** activities conducted by a skilled consultant (the third party), which are designed to "help two members of an organization manage their interpersonal conflict". They are based on confrontation tactics and an understanding of the processes involved in conflict and conflict resolution.

i. **Coaching and counselling activities:** activities that entail the consultant or other organization members working with individuals to help them (i) define learning goals, (ii) learn how others see their behaviour; (iii) learn new modes of behaviour to see if these help them to achieve their goals better. A central feature of this activity is the non-evaluative feedback given by others to an individual. A second feature is the joint exploration of alternative behaviours.

j. **Planning and goal-setting activities:**

questionnaire are designed to cover organizational readiness factors and even-numbered statements, the individual readiness to make decisions and solve problems within the organization.

Tasks

1. Distribute the questionnaire and ask each individual to complete and score it.

2. Have participants, as they finish the questionnaire, form small groups of three to discuss the results of the questionnaire.

3. In these groups of three, one person is to act as a consultant to another and the third is to observe the discussion and feed back information about the content and process of the discussion to the other two.

   The purpose of these discussions is twofold: (a) to help each individual better understand what problems might be affecting his or her individual and organization's performance when it comes to day-to-day operations, based upon the results of the questionnaire; (b) to practice individual skills in helping others in a coaching, problem solving situation. The role of the observer is to give the other two participants feedback on their ability to clarify the issues and concerns outlined in the assessment questionnaire. The intention is not to determine ways to improve the individual's, or his or her organization's, state of readiness but to understand these states of readiness. Each round of discussions and feedback should take approximately 20 minutes (15 for discussion and 5 for observer feedback).
   After each participant has had an opportunity to perform all the roles, the total group should be reconvened to discuss the experience. The trainer might, during the three person discussions, gather the individual scores for personal and organizational readiness and post them as part of the final discussion.

4. Convene a plenary session to discuss the exercise and to summarize the small-group discussions. For example, ask the group such questions as: What problems seem to be most common? Least common? Is the individual or his/her organization, more ready to engage in problem solving? Given the results of the questionnaire and the small-group discussions, what does the group think the course should focus on to improve individual and/or organizational readiness?

Exercise

A checklist to assess personal and organizational readiness

The following checklist is designed to help you assess your personal, as well as your organization's, readiness to make decisions, solve problems and bring about desirable planned changes. For each statement, circle the number you believe reflects your and your organization's operational reality. If you believe the statement is not important, check the column on the far right.

	Fully	Mostly	Partly	Slightly	Not at all	Not important
1. Top management expectations for the organization are clearly defined and communicated through-out the organization	5	4	3	2	1	
2. I understand what my immediate supervisor expects from me on the job	5	4	3		1	
3. The underlying values which guide and drive my organization and its performance are clear	5	4	3	2	1	
4. If asked what my organization values most, in terms of its overall operation, I could respond immediately	5	4	3	2	1	
5. The ground rules my organization uses to make decisions and solve problems are understood throughout the system	5	4	3	2	1	
6. While I understand these ground rules I am willing to confront them and my supervisors when they are not working to foster decision-making and problem solving in the organization	5	4	3	2	1	
7. The roles and responsibilities of each unit in the organization are clearly defined and understood	5	4	3	2	1	
8. I clearly understand what my role and responsibilities are within the organization	5	4	3	2	1	

9. Organizational resources are adequate to get the job done	5	4	3	2	1	
10. I have all the resources I need to perform my job responsibilities effectively	5	4	3	2	1	
11. Timely and accurate information is readily available in the organization for making decisions and solving problems	5	4	3	2	1	
12. I have access to the kinds of information and data I need to perform my responsibilities effectively	5	4	3	2	1	
13. My organization has clearly established goals and objectives that guide the day-to-day operations and provide long-term direction	5	4	3	2	1	
14. I understand the goals and objectives of my work unit and have a commitment to fulfilling them	5	4	3	2	1	
15. It is common in my organization to consider various options before pursuing a course of action	5	4	3	2	1	
16. I personally consider the consequences of my actions before I carry out a project or task	5	4	3	2	1	
17. Programme and budget targets are set for the organization and, in most instances, met	5	4	3	2	1	
18. If someone asked me to define the performance target of my work unit for the fiscal year, I could answer immediately	5	4	3	2	1	
19. The organization has a system for maintaining and evaluating programme and financial performance	5	4	3	2	1	
20. My work unit routinely assesses its performance and uses the information to make improvements	5	4	3	2	1	

The sum of all the numbers you circled for the uneven-numbered statements (1,3,5,7,etc.) represents your assessment of your organization's readiness. The total score of the even-numbered statements (2,4,6,etc.) is your assessment of your own readiness to make decisions and solve problems. The maximum score in each category is 50.

In either case, a score of 40 points or above indicates a healthy state of readiness. A total score of less than 20 in either category indicates serious deficiencies that should be addressed to achieve a state of organizational or personal readiness.

If you checked more than 5 of the 20 statements as not being important, this workshop will either prove to be a peak experience or a total waste of time.

Organizational readiness	Total Score	
Personal readiness	Total Score	
The “not important” factor	Total number checked	

ACTION RESEARCH AND PLANNING

No action without research: no research without action
Kurt Lewin

Trainer's notes

Topic: Action research and planning
Time required: approximately 1½ - 2 hours

This session is designed to provide participants with an overview of the Action Research and Planning process and to form work groups around performance deficiencies common to their individual organizations.

The assumption is made for this session and following ones that it is most effective to have the training participants apply the various steps in the Action Research and Planning process to specific performance problems they are experiencing in their organization.

Tasks

1. Give a short lecture on the seven steps involved in Action Research and Planning and how it can prepare participants to be more effective decision makers and problem solvers. Leave time for questions and discussions.

2. Ask each participant to fill out the Performance Discrepancy Indicators Checklist, entitled "Taking the Temperature of Your Organization".

3. Divide the total group into smaller groups of 3 to 5 participants based upon common interests. You may want to list the most common discrepancies from the individual checklists on newsprint or a blackboard to facilitate the formation of groups.

4. If there is time, each group can spend the remainder of the session clarifying the discrepancy indicator they will address during the remaining sessions on AR.

Overview

Making decisions and solving problems are two of the most important tasks that managers perform. They permeate day-to-day operations and affect the long term health of any organization. In spite of the common nature of these two activities in organizational life, many managers are under skilled in carrying out the processes of decision making and problem solving. Skills, of course are only one aspect of performance in these two vital areas of concern. Motivation, resources, timing, and the overall environment of the work setting are also important to the acts of making decisions and solving problems.

On the other hand, one can argue that all of these factors are integral to decision making and problem solving. The effective manager's "skilfulness"' should not only include a well-honed set of tactics but an overall philosophy and strategy of management.

The manager's effectiveness will be judged not only by his or her ability to make decisions or to solve problems, but to perform these " within the larger context. Mature judgement, consideration for others, involvement of colleagues, attention to long term as well as short term consequences and many other factors and qualities make for good management.

As basic as decision making and problem solving skills are to the effective performance of all managers, they are often overlooked in management courses and woefully absent in many organizations.

The action research and planning connections

What do research and planning have to do with the manager's ability to "make" decisions or to "solve" problems. After all, research and planning sound a bit academic and most organizations relegate these activities to staff personnel - not line managers.

Since many managers hold these perceptions of research and planning, I believe it is important to look at these two management strategies in some depth.

The act of planning, in most organizations, has been misunderstood, misallocated and misused. Sometimes, planning is seen as "'the thing to do". Your organization is not considered a modem organization if it doesn't have a "planning department. Planners are frequently viewed as staff functionaries far removed from the day-to-day action. Consequently, top managers often ignore their advice when it comes to making decisions.

Planning is all too often seen as a pre-management function. How often have you seen the terms "planning and management", "planning and implementation"? On the other side of the planning conundrum is the belief that making decisions is an integral part of implementation. Decision making is management work. Planning is planner's work. WRONG! Planning is decision making. When managers are engaged in determining what the potential problems and opportunities are in their organization, and sorting among the best options to be considered in addressing them, and figuring out how to allocate scarce resources, they are not only planning, they are making decisions. Planning is decision making - and managers should plan. It is too important to be left to staff personnel who are labelled as planners.

Action research

While you may be convinced that planning belongs in the manager's tool kit, research is a very different issue. If we are talking about basic research, or even applied research, I would tend to agree with you. But, the issue on the table is action research. It is, as the saying goes, a horse of a different colour. Action research is very much an operating strategy. As an operating strategy, it produces both knowledge and change. In the dynamic world in which most organizations and their managers operate, increased knowledge is critical and planned change is expected. Action research is an approach that can accomplish both.

Action research, as a management strategy, involves more than just a set of working tools. Action research is a conceptual framework for thinking about problems as well as a managerial philosophy that can be used to center all activities.

Action research, because it is both conceptual and practical, philosophical and pragmatic, must be embraced not only as a logical sequence of steps to be taken (seven, in the case of these training materials) but as an overall strategy for improving individual and organizational performance. Consequently, action research is different from most approaches to decision making and problem solving. The differences are worth noting.

- **Action research involves widespread participation**
  Everyone who is involved in the problem is seen as capable of making a contribution.

  AR is based on the fundamental belief that people are more likely to change if they participate in exploring the reasons for, and the means of, change.

- **Action research puts a premium on learning**
  Training is built into the heart of the process. The intent is not simply to solve immediate problems, but to help those involved to gain the knowledge and skills needed to solve future problems. This is critical in organizations that are thin on management capacity.

- **Action research is practical and direct**
  It is carried out within the context of real issues and concerns defined by those involved; and involves practical research as a means of gathering the information which can be use immediately to enhance the process of problem solving.

- **Action research is developmental**
  A major task of AR is to develop individuals, organizations and communities to help them become more self-reliant.

- **Action research is experimental**
  It is an approach, which is flexible and open to new changes. It encourages experimentation and practice; recognizing the importance of using that which is learned to guide that which is yet to be done.

- **Action research is dynamic**
  It attempts to comprehend an ever widening range of factors and consequences in an effort to be congruent with the needs and environment of the client system.

Action research: a seven step process

Action research involves seven interrelated steps, or tactics, within the overall strategy. These steps are summarized as follows:

(a) **Building a Problem Solving Relationship**

Like the foundation of a house, the relationship of the people engaged in problem-solving is the base upon which all future actions rest. When that relationship is one of mutual trust and understanding, the process of making decisions and solving problems is greatly improved.

Building the relationship means:

- Sharing people's expectations and values
- Setting ground rules
- Assuming useful roles and responsibilities
- Learning how to work as a team

(b) **Identifying Problems and Opportunities**

This is the initial process of determining what problem the group is trying to solve or what opportunity it hopes to capture. Sometimes this also means redefining the problem or opportunity. This step generally involves:

- Identifying potential problems and opportunities
- Discussing and sorting out those items
- Deciding which items are most important and which can be ignored

(c) **Analysing the Problem**

Once the critical problem area is determined, the problem solving team needs to:

- Explore the nature and extent of the problem
- Translate the problem into an objective statement
- Analyse the forces working for and against the achievement of that objective

(d) **Planning a Course of Action**

Having analysed the problem, the next step is to decide how best to tackle it. This entails:

- Identifying a full range of options
- Analysing each option
- Developing a plan of action (usually one, or a combination of options)
- Devising a method of evaluating the proposed action

(e) **Experimenting and Redesigning**

Too many promising solutions are "implemented" without a trial period and, in effect, are never successfully implemented. AR calls for a period of experimentation and practice. This allows the problem solving team to assess how effective and workable its proposed plan of action will be, and to redesign it if necessary.

(f) **Implementing the desired course of action**

This is doing it for real; it is putting into effect the plan of action and managing the changes that accompany that plan. Even at this stage there is room for modifications and improvements.

(g) **Evaluating the Results**

At various points during the implementation stage, the plan of action is evaluated against the original objectives established in Step C.

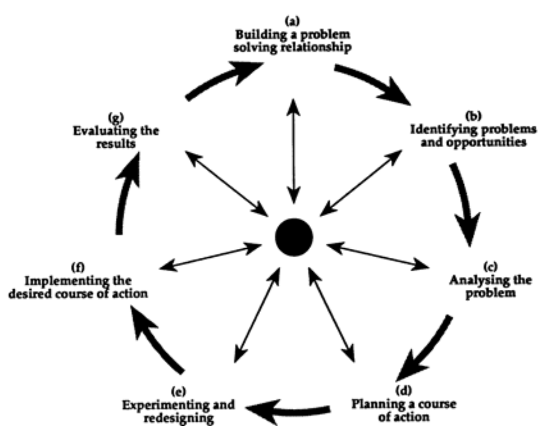
While each of these steps will be more detailed in the materials that follow, it may be helpful to review a graphic representation of the total process, following this discussion. The Action Research process is deliberately shown as a cyclical and not a straight line process. There are reasons for this:

(a) The idea of recycling is built into the approach. Once the cycle is complete, it should lead to another cycle, based upon what has been learned and accomplished.
(b) The process can be entered into at any stage in the life of an organization or community.
(c) The process is often untidy, moving back and forth between the steps as required in any particular situation. This is represented by the arrows that connect the various parts with the hub of the cycle.

It is often necessary to return to a previous step for one reason or another. One may realise, for example, that it is impossible to set objectives (c) without a better understanding of the problem or opportunity (b). At other times, steps in the process might be skipped. For example, the course of action (d) maybe so clear and the time so short that experimentation (e) doesn't make sense. The important point is to view the process as dynamic, one which is flexible and responsive to the needs and desires of those who use it.

Think like, a man of action; act like a man of thought

ACTION RESEARCH



Exercise
Topic: Performance Discrepancy Indicators: A Checklist
Time required: 30 minutes

The following exercise is designed to highlight performance discrepancies common to most organizations. It is also a way for the trainer(s) and workshop participants to identify a number of problems/issues to work on as they go through the various steps in the action research process (which represents a major focus of the workshop).

By using this exercise to form workshop groups, you can be more assured that the participants are working on performance discrepancies they are also experiencing in their individual organizations. Anyway you, as the trainer, can make the training more relevant to the participants' experience back on the job will not only have an impact on their motivation to learn, but have an impact on the potential application of the learning.

The tasks to be undertaken by the training participants, in completing the Performance Discrepancy Indicator Exercise, are outlined on the sheets that will be provided to the trainees. Review these tasks before using the exercise in the classroom. Better yet, complete the checklist yourself before you use it. This is good advice for all training exercises of this kind. To paraphrase the "golden rule" - don't do to others what you haven't done to yourself beforehand.

Tasks

1. Ask each participant to complete the Performance Discrepancy Indicator Questionnaire and score their responses. Explain how the scoring works. After each indicator is a scale of 0 to 50; 1 means there is no discrepancy and, therefore, no action is needed at this time. At the other end of the continuum is 50 which indicates a discrepancy of the highest order. Do something immediately! In between are 49 other choices, depending on the participant's perception of the particular discrepancy and its state of existence in the organization. After scoring each, the participant is to total the scores and divide by 10. This will give each respondent a "temperature" score to record on the thermometer.

2. After they have scored, convene the participants into small groups of two to four to discuss their individual scores further. You can also ask them to give you their scores so you can do a group profile of temperatures for later discussion.

3. Close the session by reflecting on the importance of looking at performance discrepancies as a management tactic.

Taking the Temperature of Your Organization
A Checklist of Performance Discrepancy Indicators

I. Indicators of Known Discrepancies
Check each on the scale of 0 to 50 and record your response on the line at the right.
Remember: 0 = no problem; 50 = serious problem

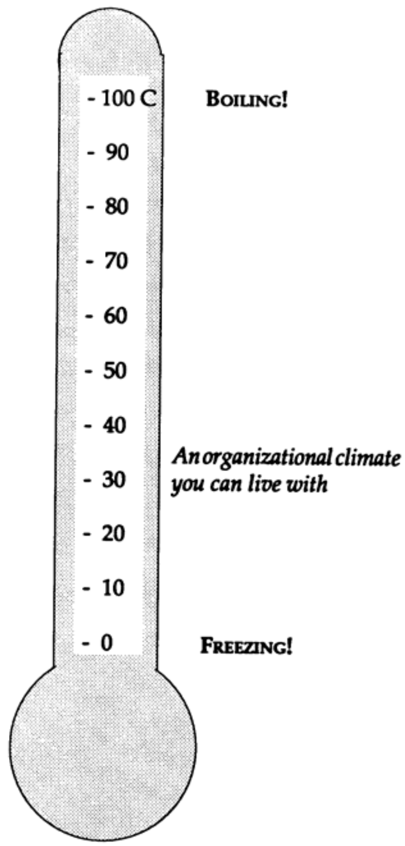
1. Costs are rising in relation to output	0 … 10 … 15 … 20 … 25 … 30 … 35 … 40 … 45 … 50	
2. Work quality is below expectations	0 … 10 … 15 … 20 … 25 … 30 … 35 … 40 … 45 … 50	
3. Short term goals are not being met	0 … 10 … 15 … 20 … 25 … 30 … 35 … 40 … 45 … 50	
4. Employee grievances are increasing	0 … 10 … 15 … 20 … 25 … 30 … 35 … 40 … 45 … 50	
5. Customer complaints are increasing	0 … 10 … 15 … 20 … 25 … 30 … 35 … 40 … 45 … 50	
6. Work loads are not evenly distributed	0 … 10 … 15 … 20 … 25 … 30 … 35 … 40 … 45 … 50	
7. Employees are not getting needed information	0 … 10 … 15 … 20 … 25 … 30 … 35 … 40 … 45 … 50	
8. Equipment failures are common	0 … 10 … 15 … 20 … 25 … 30 … 35 … 40 … 45 … 50	
9. Work is running behind schedule	0 … 10 … 15 … 20 … 25 … 30 … 35 … 40 … 45 … 50	
10. Staff turnovers/vacancies are higher than usual	0 … 10 … 15 … 20 … 25 … 30 … 35 … 40 … 45 … 50	
11. Employee morale is declining	0 … 10 … 15 … 20 … 25 … 30 … 35 … 40 … 45 … 50	
12. Personal conflicts are common	0 … 10 … 15 … 20 … 25 … 30 … 35 … 40 … 45 … 50	
13. Creative ideas or suggestions are rare	0 … 10 … 15 … 20 … 25 … 30 … 35 … 40 … 45 … 50	
14. Employees are unwilling to take risks	0 … 10 … 15 … 20 … 25 … 30 … 35 … 40 … 45 … 50	
15. Non-compliance with regulations is common	0 … 10 … 15 … 20 … 25 … 30 … 35 … 40 … 45 … 50	
16. Accident and injury rates are high	0 … 10 … 15 … 20 … 25 … 30 … 35 … 40 … 45 … 50	

17. Co-operation among work units is low	0 … 10 … 15 … 20 … 25 … 30 … 35 … 40 … 45 … 50	
18. Mistakes are often repeated	0 … 10 … 15 … 20 … 25 … 30 … 35 … 40 … 45 … 50	
19. Equipment and material shortages are common	0 … 10 … 15 … 20 … 25 … 30 … 35 … 40 … 45 … 50	
20. Misuse or misappropriation of funds, equipment and supplies is common	0 … 10 … 15 … 20 … 25 … 30 … 35 … 40 … 45 … 50	
RAW SCORE - Total 1-20		
EFFECTIVE SCORE - Divide the raw score by 10 and record here		
This represents the "temperature" of your organization		

Exercise

Take the temperature of your organization

Take the effective score from the previous page and mark it on the thermometer. Discuss it with your work colleagues.



Exercise

II. Pick the highest scoring performance discrepancy, based upon the organizational assessment you just completed and list it below. (Alternative: Pick a discrepancy which is particularly troubling to you personally as the problem you want to address in the problem solving session.)

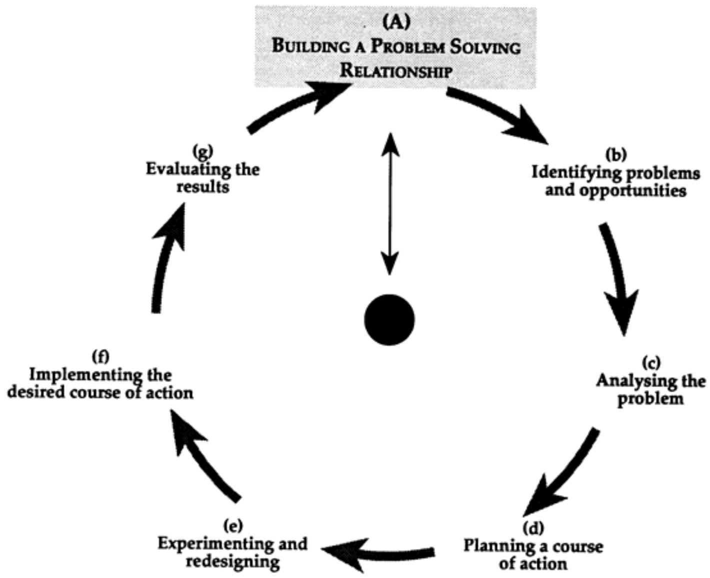
____

____

____

III. Identify up to four other individuals in the course who have identified the same performance discrepancy as being indicative of a problem in their organizations and form a work team. This team will work together for the next few days to apply the action research process for decision making and problem solving. The course instructor will assist with identifying and organizing teams around specific performance discrepancy indicators.

BUILDING A PROBLEM SOLVING RELATIONSHIP



Man is bundle of relationships, a knot of roots, whose flowers and fruitage is the world
Ralph Waldo Emerson

Trainer's notes

Topic: Building a problem solving relationship
Time required: approximately 1 - $1^1/_2$ hours

This session is designed to help the participants understand the importance of reaching out to others who should be involved in problem solving (or tapping opportunities) and how to build an effective working relationship with these individuals, groups and organizations. Two issues are important to convey in this session. The first is the importance of collaboration and participation. Few problems and opportunities are best addressed alone. Most involve others. Involving others in the problem solving process early saves time and resources in the long run. The second issue has to do with clarifying assumptions, values, roles and responsibilities as quickly as possible in the problem solving process.

Tasks

1. Deliver a short lecture based upon the written materials and your own experience in working with others. An alternative is to pose the question, "What are the critical issues you need to think about in building a problem solving relationship with others?" Follow the query by asking "Why are these issues important?" Once the training participants have contributed to the discussion, you can fill in the missing pieces from your own knowledge and the notes provided in the workbook.

2. Many alternatives are possible as a follow up to the previous task. I would probably ask each individual to construct a list of important collaborators who might assist in overcoming the performance discrepancy identified in the previous training session, stating why they are important to the problem solving process. You might also use a three way discussion as a way of soliciting information on the who, why, and how of building problem solving relationships. In this training approach, one person discusses his or her problem, another acts as the

consultant/coach, and the third monitors the discussion and gives both feedback on the substance and the process of their dialogue.

3. Once the training participants have discussed, in one way or another, who is important to the problem solving process you might want to stage a role play between the person with the problem and a party who can contribute to its resolution. For example, ask for a volunteer who would like to seek assistance in solving the performance problem identified in the previous session. The person should identify in broad terms for the training group the essence of the problem and someone they believe can help solve it. The potential collaborator needs to be described in some detail (e.g., Who is it? What is his or her role? What is the relationship between the two?). The reason for soliciting information, which is as specific as possible regarding the collaboration role, is to prepare another participant to play this person's role in the discussion that follows.

   Once you have enough information about the problem and the potential collaborator, ask someone from the group to play the role of the problem solving collaborator. You will want the role play to clarify: the problem and its ramifications; assumptions about working together; values that each party might hold that are important to the problem solving venture; and the roles and responsibilities each can be expected to fulfil.

   The role-playing should continue until you believe optimum learning has been achieved from the discussion or it raises questions, either in content or process, that could benefit from an open discussion involving all course participants. There is no magic formula for determining this point in a role play. Let your judgement and intuition guide your actions.

One final comment about the above notes: They are written to give you general ideas about how to handle the session, not detailed step-by-step procedures to follow. I believe training sessions are more effective when the trainer has flexibility in both design and content, given the needs of the trainees. Too often training designs are written in a rigid lock-step fashion which give the trainer little room for adaptation. Such designs deny creativity and input from the trainees, as well as the trainer.

Overview
Step A: Building a problem solving relationship

Whatever the situation whether (meeting as a management team to address performance problems and plan major changes or working with community groups), the relationship among members of a group has a great deal to do with the group's ability to solve problems, to learn, and to plan new programs. Like the foundation of a house, the problem solving relationship needs to be built, and sometimes rebuilt, since almost every other action depends upon the strength of this relationship.

Factors to consider in building an effective problem-solving relationship are:

- **Expectations**
  What expectations do various parties to the problem-solving process have about their working together? Within a training session, for example, it is important for the trainees to know the expectation of the trainers and the sponsoring organizations. Likewise, the trainers need to know what the trainees expect from the program. If these expectations are very different, it could lead to serious problems in communicating and working together. To the extent possible, it is important to work toward a common set of expectations. The expectations of large groups of employees in many. organizations never get surfaced. They continue to be hidden and the organization's ability to make decisions and solve problems is thwarted.

  If a pickpocket meets a holy man, he, will only see his pockets

- **Values**
  People who join organizations and groups often have strong values, e.g., things they prize or place a high value on. For example, many trainers value shared responsibility for, and involvement in, learning - the belief that people are not taught - they learn. This suggests active involvement in setting learning goals and contributing to the learning of others. The participants also come with their own values and they may be in conflict with those of the teaching staff. Values are a part of every interaction we undertake they need to be mutually understood if people are to work well together.

- **Ground Rules**

A good problem solving relationship involves establishing ground rules that are understood and agreed upon by all parties. How many times have you gone into a situation when you did not know what the ground rules were? Not a comforting feeling, is it?

A group that strives to make quality decisions and to solve complex problems needs to establish ground rules on how it is going to operate. These include:

- How it will go about analysing and solving problems
- How it will make decisions
- How it will set agendas, keep notes, share information
- Whether it will have a regular group leader or rotate that responsibility among the participants.

- **Roles and Responsibilities**
  The roles and responsibilities of each party involved, and how these are viewed by others, are important issues to be considered in establishing an effective problem solving relationship.

  People play various roles in group - some helpful, sonar not so helpful. We will be looking at those roles in this course and how they affect each group's work.

- **Resources**
  Any task to be undertaken requires resources. It is important to initially assess whether or not you have the necessary resources available, or whether you can acquire them if and when they are needed. Nothing stops problem solving more quickly than a lack of resources or the belief that they are not available.

Building a problem solving relationship is getting to know the territory in which decision making and Problem solving should take place. It would include raising and answering questions that help develop a level of trust and understanding among those who should be involved. To assure a high level of congruence between the ideas being taught in the course and the behaviour of the instructors, certain things should be done to aid building such a relationship. For example, the objectives of the course should be explained, along with the proposed schedule. There should be an opportunity for you (the participants) to discuss the objectives and make changes if they feel this is necessary. The trainers, should talk about some of our own values about learning why we believe they are important, and what they mean in this program.

The training program also provides an opportunity for you to express their expectations about the training and your particular needs as operating managers and trainers.

Finally, the training program is an opportunity to increase knowledge and skills in group work - all of which should Contribute to a solid relationship. These are discussed in more detail in the following section.

What to look for in building effective relationships

- **Group Values and Behaviours**
  What people do in the problem solving relationship is important and may have a greater impact on what happens than anything else. Here are some things that are helpful in building a strong working relationship.

  (a) **Empathy**. It is important to try to see the situation from another person's point of view - to "tune in" on the other person. Managers often forget what it was like to be a – "worker". Reflecting upon those experiences can be important in becoming a more effective manager.

  (b) **Honesty**. Being honest will contribute to effective problem solving. While direct communication has different connotations in different cultures, it is a value worth considering.

  (c) **Respect**. Having a positive regard for others and respecting their feelings, experience and potential for contribution is important to effective relationships and problem solving.

  (d) **Commitment**. There are a number of ways that commitment can be measured, including presence and involvement in the task.

  (e) **Flexibility**. Above all, the effective problem-solver is flexible, willing hear others and to change his or her mind when a better idea is presented or a better way is found.

- **Group functions**
  Another important part of effective problem solving is an understanding of how groups function. How we interact with others is a complex, interesting part of everyday life. Here are some things to know about working together that can be useful in making our interaction with, others more productive.

Content and process

In all human interactions, there are two major ingredients - content and process. The first deals with the subject matter of the task upon which the group is working. In many interactions, the, focus of attention is on the content.

The second ingredient, process, is concerned with what is happening between and to group members while the group is working. In many interactions, little attention is paid to process, even when it is the major cause of ineffective group action.

Sensitivity to group process will better enable one to diagnose group problems early and deal with them more effectively. Since these processes are present in all groups, awareness of them will enhance a person's worth to a group and enable him or her to be a more effective group participant.

Participation

One indication of involvement is verbal participation. Look for differences in the amount of participation among members:

- Who says a lot; who doesn't?
- Do you see any shift in participation, e.g., “talkers” become quiet; quiet people suddenly become talkative?
- How are the silent people treated? How is their silence interpreted? Is it seen as consent, disagreement, disinterest, fear?
- Who talks to whom?
- Who keeps the discussion going? Why?

Influence

Influence and participation are not the same. Some people may speak very little, yet they capture the attention of the whole group. Others may talk a lot but are generally not listened to by other members.

- Does anyone make a decision and carry it out without checking with other group members? (self-authorised). For example, he/she decides on the topic to be discussed and immediately begins to talk about it.
- Does the group drift from topic to topic?
- Who supports other members' suggestions or decisions? Does this support result in the two members deciding the topic or activity for the group?
- Is there any evidence of the majority pushing a decision through over other members objections? Do they call for a vote (majority support)?
- Is there any attempt to get all members participating in a decision (consensus)?

Group roles

For a group to work effectively, a number of functions or roles must be performed by both the designated leader and/or the members of the group. The performance of these functions permits the group to satisfy the needs of its members and to move toward achievement of its objectives. There are two main categories of leadership/membership functions: (1) those required to meet needs on the level of task achievement; (2) those required to meet needs on the level of group maintenance. A third category of composite roles helps the group both to do the job and also maintain and strengthen itself as a group.

Task functions

The following task functions are necessary if a group is to operate effectively. If any of these roles are omitted, the effectiveness of the group declines.

(a) **Initiating Activity:** Proposing solutions; suggesting new ideas; providing new definitions.

(b) **Seeking Information:** Asking for clarification of suggestions; requesting additional information or facts.

(c) **Seeking Opinions:** Looking for an expression of feeling about something from members; seeking clarification of values, suggestions, or ideas.

(d) **Giving Information:** Offering facts and relating one's own experience to the group problems to illustrate points.

(e) **Giving Opinions:** Stating an opinion or belief concerning suggestions others might make.

(f) **Elaborating:** Clarifying; giving examples or developing meanings; trying to envision how a proposal might work out if adopted.

(g) **Co-ordinating:** Showing relationships among various ideas or suggestions; trying to pull ideas or suggestions together; drawing together activities of various subgroups or members.

(h) **Summarizing:** Pulling together related ideas or suggestions; restating suggestions after the group has discussed them.

(i) **Testing Feasibility:** Making application of suggestions to real situations; examining the practicality and workability of ideas.

Relationship functions

In this category are described those functions which are required to strengthen and maintain the life of the group and its activities. They are necessary in order to alter or sustain the way in which members of the group work together.

(j) **Encouraging:** Being friendly and responsive to others; praising others and their ideas; agreeing with and accepting the contributions of others.

(k) **Gate-keeping:** Making it possible for another member to make a contribution to the group; or suggesting limited talking time for everyone so that all will have a chance to be heard.

(1) **Standard Setting:** Expressing standards for the group to use in choosing its content or procedures or in evaluating its decisions.

(m) **Following:** Going along with the decisions of the group; thoughtfully accepting the ideas of others.

(n) **Expression of Group Feeling:** Summarising what group feeling is sensed to be; describing reactions of the group to ideas or solutions.

Dual functions

This category of leader/member roles represents functions which accomplish a dual purpose. They help to integrate the group, while at the same time, releasing its energies toward the achievement of its task or solution to its problem.

(o) **Evaluating:** Submitting group decisions or accomplishments for comparison with group standards; measuring accomplishments against goals.

(p) **Diagnosing:** Determining sources of difficulties and appropriate steps to take next; analysing the main blocks to progress.

(q) **Testing for Consensus:** Tentatively asking for group opinions in order to find out whether the group is nearing consensus or a decision; sending up trial balloons to test group opinions.

(r) **Mediating:** Harmonising; conciliating differences in points of view; making compromise solutions.

(s) **Reflecting Expressed Feelings:** Recognizing and accepting feelings expressed by members of the group; restating what has been said, thus freeing a member of the group for further self-understanding, insight and participation.

Disruptive behaviour

Often in groups, one can observe behaviour that does not fit any of the above mentioned categories. This is likely to be self-centered behaviour, sometimes referred to as “non-functional” roles. This is behaviour that does not contribute to the group but only satisfies personal needs. The following non-functional roles are to be avoided in one's own behaviour.

(a) **Being Aggressive:** Working for status by criticising or blaming others; showing hostility against the group or some individual; deflating the ego or status of others.

(b) **Blocking:** Interfering with the progress of the group by going off on a tangent; citing personal experiences unrelated to the problem; arguing too much on a point; rejecting ideas without consideration.

(c) **Competing:** Vying with others to produce the best idea; talk the most; play the most roles; gain favour with the leader.

(d) **Special Pleading:** Introducing or supporting one's own pet concerns or philosophies; lobbying.

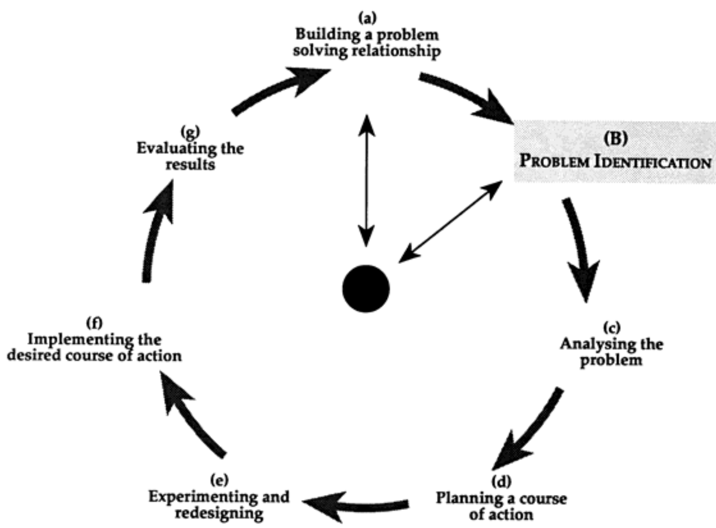
(e) **Seeking Recognition:** Attempting to call attention to one's self by loud or excessive talking; extreme ideas; unusual behaviour.

(f) **Withdrawal:** Acting indifferent or passive; resorting to excessive formality; day-dreaming; whispering to others; wandering from the subject.

Problem solving relationships and group process

It is important for managers to understand group process and its impact on managerial decision making and problem solving. Managers rarely work alone. Their average day is filled with meetings - from one-on-one counselling of valued employees - to small work sessions - to large group settings. In every case, those involved must consider how best to develop the relationship, whether temporary or long standing, so it will be productive. Those who know how to build problem solving relationships in a variety of interactive circumstances have mastered one of the keystone skills for effective management.

PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION



One sometimes finds what one is not looking for
Alexander Fleming

Trainer's notes

Topic: Problem identification
Time required: approximately 2½ - 3 hours (can vary given, the way this exercise is processed)

This session is designed to help participants understand how to identify problems more precisely. On the surface, this may seem unnecessary. After all, a problem is a problem. Unfortunately, many managers encounter difficulty in carrying out their responsibilities because they do not take tins to identify problems more accurately or have the necessary skills to do so. In either case, this is an important step in the problem solving process and merits attention in management training.

Tasks

1. Present a short lecture based upon the written materials in the workbook and your own experience. Focus on the differences between problems symptoms and solutions. This is an area where many managers encounter difficulty in the problem solving process.

2. If you have small groups of participants working on performance deficiency indicators identified in an earlier session, have these small work groups (3 4 participants) use the problem identification exercise to verify the problem and to increase understanding about the problem. Since the performance deficiency will vary in its particulars with each participant's work situation, I would have each individual complete the questionnaire and then hold a discussion, within the small work group, of the similarities and differences in their perceptions of the problem.

   An alternative option is to have the total group identify a problem common to most organizations and work through the questions outlined in the exercise in a plenary session. Each step in the process can be discussed regarding its implications to problem solving.

3. The small group discussions can be followed by a plenary session to reemphasize the key points in problem identification and to answer remaining questions.

Step B: Identifying problems and opportunities

In the action research cycle of events no step in the process can be as difficult as identifying problems and opportunities. Of course, there are times when the problems we face, or the opportunities that can be tapped, are crystal dear. No one questions them and they can be addressed directly.

There are other times, however, when problems are fuzzy, ambiguous, difficult to describe. They even go around masqueraded as something else. While opportunities can also fit these descriptive terms, they are more often limited by the imagination and the courage of the organization and its leaders. First, a look at problem identification.

Thinking is preparation for action. People who are afraid of action, increase, the preparation
Otto Fenichel

The "how to" of problem identification

Problems are those things that keep you or your organization from getting from where you are to where you want to be. This suggests that you know where you want to be - which is not always the case. Sometimes problems defy identification, let alone solution, because we are not dear about what we want to achieve.

Setting goals, or defining end results (what would the problem look like if it were solved?), becomes an important task early in the problem solving process. Without knowing where we want to go, it is difficult to determine: (1) how we want to get there; and (2) whether or not we have arrived. If we don't know where we want to go, it doesn't help to buy a road map.

Another "problem" in identifying problems is the tendency for problems to mask themselves as symptoms, or even solutions. Symptoms are those visible aspects of a problem that often bring the problem to our attention. Symptoms rarely explain a problem; they are only manifestations of the problem. For example, a headache is a symptom of something else. The problem could be eyestrain which, in turn, may be a symptom of something else - a problem within a problem. We could treat the headache (a symptom) but the next time we read, the "problem" returns. Effective problem solvers need to dig beneath the surface, where symptoms reside, if satisfactory results are to be achieved. Solutions also masquerade as problems. In a workshop of this kind, a management team from an East Africa city was asked to identify a problem. They said they needed to install water meters throughout the community. Problem or solution? Solution, of course, but what's the problem? When they took the mask off their "problem", they discovered two different faces. Water meters would: (1) raise revenues and (2) save water - a scarce resource. In this case, the management team was faced with two legitimate problems: (a) a revenue deficiency and (b) a limited water supply. Once the management team "identified" the real problems, water meters were no longer seen as a problem, but a solution. The team quickly realized that the installation of water meters was only one solution to the two-faced resource problem. There are many ways to raise revenue or conserve water. Identifying a solution as the problem often denies the consideration of other solutions.

One of the first questions to ask in the problem identification stage of problem solving is: "Have we defined the problem or have we identified a solution?"

The problem dialogue

One way to understand your problem is to talk to it - ask it a series of simple questions. This dialogue with your problem is perhaps the easiest way to understand whether you have a problem and whether or not you want to do something about it. Sometimes the best solution is not to solve the problem.

Here are some questions to ask your problem.

- What is the problem?
- Why is it a problem?
- Why should the problem be solved?
- When is it a problem?
- Where is it a problem?
- Whose problem is it?
- Are others interested in the problem?
- Do they see it as a problem?
- Would they be willing to contribute to its solution?
- Who is sufficiently unhappy with the problem that they are willing to try and solve it?
- Who will be opposed to solving the problem?
- What, really, is the problem, and why? (It is important to continue to come back to these fundamental questions even though you thought you had the answers earlier?)
- Is the problem, as we defined it, a symptom of something else? (A problem within a problem?)
- Have we defined the problem as a solution?
- What would happen if we didn't solve the problem? How many times have you been so perplexed by a problem that you simply ignored it - and it slowly went away? Sometimes the best solution to a problem is no solution.

These questions, when taken seriously, will trigger a flow of information that will: (1) help you understand the complexity of the problem; and (2) begin to suggest alternatives for solution.

For example, questions regarding individuals or groups who are involved in the problem and their commitment to resolving it may, in fact, begin to tell you that the time is not right to spend your energies trying to solve the problem at this time. Just because a problem exists, doesn't n-can those involved are willing to do anything about it.

On the other hand, solving the problem may require a redefinition of both the problem and those who can help bring about a solution. As mentioned earlier, identifying the problem can be the most difficult step in the action research process.

A problem well stated is a problem half-solved

The opportunity game

Effective managing not only involves making decisions and solving problems. It also requires a pro-active stance by the manager to search out and seize upon opportunities, both within the organization and its external environment. Problem solving by its very nature, is reactive. The manager has a problem he or she reacts to solve it. Opportunities require a proactive style - reaching out for a course of action that is important but not urgent. Problems are urgent, or they would not be seen as problems. On the other hand, they are not always important.

There are other distinctions one can also make between problems and opportunities.

- Problems are often oriented toward maintenance (fix it, solve it, get on with it). By contrast, opportunities are focused on development.
- Opportunities as problematic, they always involve some risk and uncertainty. Is it feasible? Will it work? If it works, will there be any benefits? If there are benefits, will they outweigh the costs? Problems on the other hand, only become risky and uncertain when they are not solved.
- Opportunities live in the future and the risks must be calculated against a future that is not always predictable. Problems live in the past, resulting from actions or in actions that have or have not already happened. The results of solving the problem or not solving the problem is often more predictable.
- Opportunities require foresight - a vision about what can be. Problems more often than not require hindsight - determining what went wrong.
- The critical question, when tapping opportunities, is: What if? The important question, when solving problems, is: why?

- With problems, you seek solutions. With opportunities, the search is for benefits.
- Finally, opportunities can be ignored. Problems, more often than not, cannot be ignored.

The optimistic manager sees an opportunity in every problem while the pessimistic manager, when presented with an opportunity, only sees problems in trying to take advantage of it. The difference between a problem and an opportunity is sometimes only a state of mind.

EXERCISE
Topic: Problem Identification

The following questions are designed to help you define your problem in more detail. (If you have decided to pursue an opportunity, many of the following tasks would also apply.)

1. What is the problem? (Start with a rough description and underline the key words and phrases.)

____

____

____

2. Why is it a problem? What would the problem look like if it were solved?

____

____

____

3. Whose problem is it? Who owns it? (Once you have determined who the problem belongs to, go back and underline all those you believe are willing to invest in its solution and, finally, circle the individual, group or organization you believe is the most important in the problem solving venture).

____

____

____

4. Where is it a problem? Is it localised and isolated, or is it widespread and pervasive?

____

____

____

5. When is it a problem? (e.g., every Monday morning at 8 a.m.; once in a full moon; only when it rains; when the boss is in town). As with other questions, be as specific as possible in your answer.

____

____

____

6. How long has it been a problem? If it is a long standing problem, this may say something about the ability, will or priority to solve it

____

____

____

7. Really now, what is the problem? Go back to your statement in task one and determine whether: (a) the problem you defined is a symptom of a bigger problem; or (b) a solution to what you think is the problem. If you decide you are dealing in either symptoms or solutions, go back to Step 1 and try to identify the real problem

____

____

____

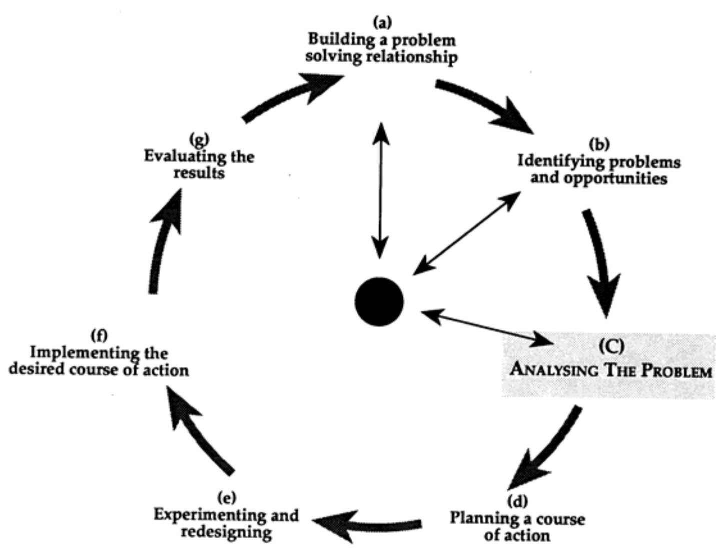
8. Finally, what would happen if nobody did anything to solve the problem?

____

____

____

ANALYSING THE PROBLEM



He, was in logic a great critic, profoundly skill'd in analytic, he could distinguish and divide, a hair 'twixt south and south-west side. On either which he would dispute, confute, chance hands, and still confute
Samuel Butler

Analysing the problem
Trainer's notes

Topic: Analysing the Problem: Part I
Time required: approximately 3 - 4 hours

After the participants have identified and verified the problem sufficiently, it is time to: (1) translate the problem into an objective (the end result); and (2) analyse the forces working form and against the objective. This session is designed to accomplish these steps in the problem solving process.