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What Is Your Ideal Organization?

A View of Two Contrasting Organizational Models

The employee group that makes up an organization contributes to an organization's "personality".

It is the "personality "of an organization that makes it act and feel as it does.
Some organizational personalities vary greatly and others vary subtly from one another.

When ask to express their idea of what constitutes the ideal organization individuals with a preference for both Sensing (S) and Judging (J) typically emphasize and concentrate on specifics and details. They are sensitive to the physical features of their work environment. Their ideal organization is indicative of complete control, certainty, and specificity. Everyone knows **EXACTLY** what his or her job is. There is no ambiguity of any kind as to what is expected in any and every circumstance.   The organization is authoritarian, perhaps the very epitome of bureaucracy. There is a single leader at the top and a well-defined hierarchical line of authority from top to bottom. The goals of an SJ organization are realistic, down-to-earth , and are concerned with precise microeconomic issues-----"We need to make X dollars by May 5 to stay solvent." Goals   emphasize the protection and preservation of tradition, and ensure that things will happen as promised. According to the SJ perception   heroes or leaders of the organization that have brought order and stability out of chaos and provide the organization with a specific and well-defined sense of direction have made the most significant contribution to the organization.

By marked contrast individuals with a preference for both intuitive (N) and Thinking (T) describe their ideal organization as one that emphasizes broad, global issues , focuses on general concepts ; and does not specify detailed work rules, roles, or lines of authority . NTs desire to focus on impersonal concepts . Their goals center around   and are concerned with theory and efficacy in the abstract and are involved with discovery, invention, and production of new ideas.   Where as SJs exist to serve the present and specific needs of their particular organization , NTs are impersonal idealist who desire to serve the intellectual and theoretical concepts of the organization in general. NTs seek matrix organizations in which roles, jobs, rewards, and authority systems are broadly defined. They view flexibility and adaptability as a crucial factor in a constantly shifting and enveloping marketplace. Where as the organizational heroes of SJs are problem solvers the organizational heroes of NTs are broad conceptualizes that envision new products and markets, and long-term time horizons.

A look at two companies UPS and Federal Express both in the business of shipping packages illustrates how one of the companies manifests the personality traits and company cultural of an SJ organization and the other that of an NT organization.

UPS is an 82-year-old company that calls itself "the tightest ship in the shipping business". *Business Week* describes UPS's internal process as :
Endless time-and-motion studies that dictate how fast delivery people should walk (3 feet a second), which finger should be used to hold their keys (the middle), and how they should fold their money (face up, sequentially ordered). In addition to which , each truck is equipped with a skylight so that driver can see the labels. UPS concerns itself with the details of the situation not with generalities.

Federal Express is also a very successful company but with a very different organizational "personality" and focus. Federal Express was founded on a premise based on an imaginative idea-----. The customer's world had changed greatly since UPS first entered the shipping industry. Customers want overnight delivery and will pay for expedited service. The company was founded on an idea that did not yet exist. And while Federal Express may not be "the tightest ship in the shipping business" the company runs its own fleet of planes and must adhere to the extremely schedules of the world's business domestic and international airports, a very complex undertaking.

Personality differences usually exist within a single company or institution, not just between companies. For example within organizations   the Marketing Department of the organization by definition of the task it performs is Extraverted (E) while the Accounting Department by definition of its task is Introverted (I). The same is true of a corporate hospital that by virtue of its function maintains both a Sensing (S) and Judging (J) "personality" while the primary focus of the health care profession itself performs a service most closely associated with the Feeling (F) .

In addition to being significantly influenced by those working within the organization other contributing factors to the "personality" of an organization , or a sub-organization within the greater organization, are: the type of business or task the organization is involved with and   the personality of the founder and subsequent leaders or heroes of the organization. Another distinguishing factor is the   history of the organization . Some organizations ,most often those that are both Sensing (S) and Judging(J)   , have long well established traditions. While others, most often those that are both iNutive(N) and Thinking(T) and those that are both Sensing (S) and Perceiving (P) do not.

****References used in this article: *Character of Organizations, by William Bridges;*
Stakeholders of the Organization, by Ian Mitroff