



PEOPLE & PROCESS

BUILDING TOMORROW'S SERVICE ORGANISATIONS

Diagnostic Exercise (Part I)

(Beyond Negotiation, Parker and Carlisle, Wiley, 1989)

Please read the following seven statements, each of which has three possible answers.

Decide which answer you think suits your ideal views best. Try to describe why, and/or under which conditions or circumstances.

Then try to find the answer that most closely represents the real situation in your organisation, and give the reason for this.

The objective of this exercise is to become aware of the differences between your ideal views of your organisation and reality.

1. Efficiency is brought about by:

A. Attracting those people whom one can trust to know their business and their job and to give of their best talents out of loyalty towards the firm.

B. Setting up systems which carefully monitor and control all aspects of the business. Standardising procedures and ways of working. Saving human labour as much as possible.

C. Developing human and capital resources on a continuous basis. Establishing relationships with the client field which enable us to respond effectively to their (situational) needs.

Our ideal choice is option because:

Our present practice is most like option because:

2. Selecting and promoting staff:

A. My key managers have had special training in interviewing techniques so that they can practice our main policy which tries to explore with the candidate to what extent job and person fit together. A joint conclusion, giving reasons, at the end of the interview is preferable to a little “thank you” note three weeks later. We apply the same principle in relation to promotions. We find that this approach makes us attractive to good candidates and gives employees confidence.

B. That is an issue in which I want to be personally involved. When I have a good interview of 30 to 45 minutes I usually have no difficulty in making up my mind. I make a special point of their background and whether they have had the right kind of practical experience. I do not believe in psychological tests and all that stuff.

C. This is primarily an issue for the specialist. My managers see to it that applicants for non-managerial jobs have the proper qualifications. For managers I need a more thorough investigation: records and references are carefully checked and as character is so important I take great heed of the advice of a psychologist.

Our ideal choice is option because:

Our present practice is most like option because:

3. Public relations are best handled when:

A. I have an open-door policy towards customers, suppliers and the community. I rely on the good reputation the firm has built up over the years by giving personal care and attention to my clients' needs. This provides a solid basis for our firm and will always earn us the respect of our community.

B. Our own sense of identity is the key to our relationship with others. We have to agree - as partners - what should be the nature of our professional services in relation to the field of clients. Both our specialised professional skills and our style of working are important in this respect. In an open and exploratory style we and our constituents should jointly and regularly review whether we still have the right level of response to their needs. "Bad news for us is then as important as good news". They are both challenges for our development.

C. I carefully keep track of all (business) developments within the community. I make use of all data local and national institutions can give me about changes in the marketplace and use modern marketing techniques. We make a special effort to have high visibility with potentially big customers. Advertising, if done professionally, will give us new opportunities.

Our ideal choice is option because:

Our present practice is most like option because:

4. In our opinion, leadership in the organisation means:

A. To give the right instructions and orders to the right people, to tell them in broad outlines how it must be done and how one likes it to be done. Then allow the people involved a large amount of freedom to execute the given instructions in the way one would like things to be done oneself. For this, strong leadership on essential points is necessary, because people have to know what they are up against. It is also important to know one's subordinates very well.

B. To see to it that everybody receives the right instructions and that these are forwarded through the formal channels. The clearer and more detailed the instructions are, the better the job will be done. It is also essential that all subordinates are treated according to the same standards, to avoid envy and favouritism.

C. Showing subordinates as soon and as clearly as possible what are the aims and policies. They will then be able to judge for themselves what relation exists between their own job and the job of others. Furthermore, it is important to see to it that subordinates are trained sufficiently to perform their tasks satisfactorily. Regular work discussions with subordinates is a means to get to know them well and helps to raise the team spirit.

Our ideal choice is option because:

Our present practice is most like option because:

5. In our opinion top management must consist of:

A. A team of able managers, who, on the basis of their different expertise, decide their division of labour amongst themselves. In setting goals and aims for the firm, as well as in deciding company policy, decisions have to be made unanimously. Leadership within the team will be mainly functional leadership, which means that all team members are individually responsible for the decisions made by the team. Within their own task areas the different team members are free to make individual decisions as long as they adhere to agreed policies.

B. A group of different specialists. Specialism means clear division of tasks. Well-defined job descriptions are absolutely necessary. One member of the group has to be (formally) the leader of the group, because one must be able to turn the scales when the votes are equal. If not, decision-making becomes very difficult, which can damage the interests of the firm.

C. One strong person who is responsible. They must know everything that is going on in the company, more or less in detail, because otherwise they are not able to make the right decisions. This kind of management is the most successful.

Our ideal choice is option because:

Our present practice is most like option because:

6. In our opinion the best way to delegate is:

A. To make a clear plan of how the work should be executed. Then the instruction, based on the plan, is given to staff. Give them some space to work out the plan and finally supervise the result and correct where needed.

B. To give instructions to staff as follows - tell them roughly what we want them to do, giving them freedom in how to implement this. Afterwards only check whether the way it was carried out is meeting our standards of the job.

C. To tell staff clearly what the goals of the job are. What the demands are, the conditions and our policy. Within this scope they are free to handle the job as they like. Only check to see that it comes up to agreed standards. As manager one is not in the first place responsible for how subordinates handle their jobs in detail, but for delegating jobs only to those that can handle the responsibility and are trained well enough to do a good job.

Our ideal choice is option because:

Our present practice is most like option because:

7. If one has to solve a problem it is our opinion that the best way is:

A. To think it over by oneself. See what experiences one has of similar problems and then make a decision. Tell your subordinates what decision you have made, so that they will be able to act accordingly. If you are not able to solve the problem by yourself, the best way is to say to your subordinates: "This is the problem, see that you solve it!" Afterwards, you have to check of course whether this has been done.

B. Check for yourself which people or what specialists one has to consult. Then talk the problem over with each of them separately. As soon as the different aspects have become clear to you, take all of them into consideration and weigh them. The decision that you take will then be communicated to your subordinates. You also make notes about this solution so that in similar cases you can take the same decision.

C. To get your subordinates together for a staff meeting and tell them what the problem is. Together you try to analyse the problem, its causes and the consequences of alternative solutions. The insight you get will enable you to find the right criteria for the solution. As soon as you have agreed these criteria, you choose the best solution in this situation.

Our ideal choice is option because:

Our present practice is most like option because: