Voices from the Field...
Building A Legacy that Helps Assure Bright Futures for Our Youth
June 16th & 17th - Washington, DC

DECISION-MAKING AND CONSENSUS BUILDING TOOLS {Attachement A}

Six Thinking Hats

"Six Thinking Hats" is a powerful technique that helps you look at important decisions from a number of different perspectives. It helps you make better decisions by pushing you to move outside your habitual ways of thinking. As such, it helps you understand the full complexity of a decision, and spot issues and opportunities which you might otherwise not notice. Many successful people think from a very rational, positive viewpoint, and this is part of the reason that they are successful. Often, though, they may fail to look at problems from emotional, intuitive, creative or negative viewpoints. This can mean that they underestimate resistance to change, don't make creative leaps, and fail to make essential contingency plans. Similarly, pessimists may be excessively defensive, and people used to a very logical approach to problem solving may fail to engage their creativity or listen to their intuition.

If you look at an issue, plan or service using the Six Thinking Hats technique, then you'll use all of these approaches to develop your best solution. Your decisions and plans will mix ambition, skill in execution, sensitivity, creativity and good contingency planning. This tool was created by Edward de Bono in his book "6 Thinking Hats".

How to Use the Tool:

Wear each "thinking Hat" to closely examine all aspects of an action, program, decision. Each "Thinking Hat" is a different style of thinking. These are explained below:

White Hat:
With this thinking hat, you focus on the data available. Look at the information you have, and see what you can learn from it. Look for gaps in your knowledge, and either try to fill them or take account of them. This is where you analyze past trends, and try to extrapolate from historical data.

Red Hat:
Wearing the red hat, you look at the decision using intuition, gut reaction, and emotion. Also try to think how other people will react emotionally, and try to understand the intuitive responses of people who do not fully know your reasoning.

Black Hat:
When using black hat thinking, look at things pessimistically, cautiously and defensively. Try to see why ideas and approaches might not work. This is important because it highlights the weak points in a plan or course of action. It allows you to eliminate them, alter your approach, or prepare contingency plans to counter problems that arise. Black Hat thinking helps to make plans tougher and more resilient. It can also help you to spot fatal flaws and risks before you embark on a course of action. Black Hat thinking is one of the real benefits of this technique, as many successful people get so used to thinking positively that often they cannot see problems in advance, leaving them under-prepared for difficulties.

Yellow Hat:
The yellow hat helps you to think positively. It is the optimistic viewpoint that helps you to see all the benefits of the decision and the value in it, and spot the opportunities that arise from it. Yellow Hat thinking helps you to keep going when everything looks gloomy and difficult.

Green Hat:
The Green Hat stands for creativity. This is where you can develop creative solutions to a problem. It is a freewheeling way of thinking, in which there is little criticism of ideas.

Blue Hat:
The Blue Hat stands for process control. This is the hat worn by people chairing meetings. When running into difficulties because ideas are running dry, they may direct activity into Green Hat thinking. When contingency plans are needed, they will ask for Black Hat thinking, and so on.

Example:
The directors of a property company are looking at whether they should construct a new office building. The economy is doing well, and the amount of vacant office space is reducing sharply. As part of their decision they decide to use the 6 Thinking Hats technique during a planning meeting.

Looking at the problem with the **White Hat**, they analyze the data they have. They examine the trend in vacant office space, which shows a sharp reduction. They anticipate that by the time the office block would be completed, that there will be a severe shortage of office space. Current government projections show steady economic growth for at least the construction period.
With Red Hat thinking, some of the directors think the proposed building looks quite ugly. While it would be highly cost-effective, they worry that people would not like to work in it.

When they think with the **Black Hat**, they worry that government projections may be wrong. The economy may be about to enter a 'cyclical downturn', in which case the office building may be empty for a long time. If the building is not attractive, then companies will choose to work in another better-looking building at the same rent.

With the **Yellow Hat**, however, if the economy holds up and their projections are correct, the company stands to make a great deal of money.

If they are lucky, maybe they could sell the building before the next downturn, or rent to tenants on long-term leases that will last through any recession.

With **Green Hat** thinking they consider whether they should change the design to make the building more pleasant. Perhaps they could build prestige offices that people would want to rent in any economic climate. Alternatively, maybe they should invest the money in the short term to buy up property at a low cost when a recession comes.

The **Blue Hat** has been used by the meeting's Chair to move between the different thinking styles. He or she may have needed to keep other members of the team from switching styles, or from criticizing other peoples' points.

Key points:
Six Thinking Hats is a good technique for looking at the effects of a decision from a number of different points of view. It allows necessary emotion and skepticism to be brought into what would otherwise be purely rational decisions. It opens up the opportunity for creativity within Decision Making. It also helps, for example, persistently pessimistic people to be positive and creative.

Plans developed using the '6 Thinking Hats' technique are sounder and more resilient than would otherwise be the case. This technique may also help to avoid public relations mistakes, and spot good reasons not to follow a course of action, before you have committed to it.
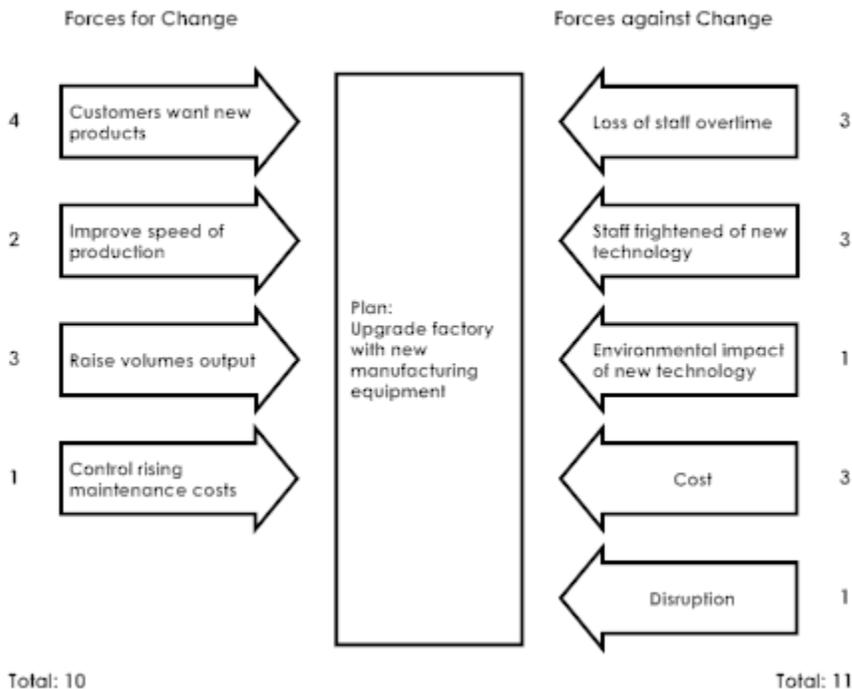
Force Field Analysis

Force Field Analysis is a useful technique for looking at all the forces for and against a decision. In effect, it is a specialized method of weighing pros and cons. By carrying out the analysis you can plan to strengthen the forces supporting a decision, and reduce the impact of opposition to it.

How to Use the Tool:
• Describe your plan or proposal for change in the middle.
• List all forces for change in one column, and all forces against change in another column.
• Assign a score to each force, from 1 (weak) to 5 (strong). For example, imagine that you are a manager deciding whether to install new manufacturing equipment in your factory as shown below in **Figure 1:**

Figure 1:
Force Field Analysis

Forces for Change		Plan:	Forces against Change	
4	Customers want new products		Loss of staff overtime	3
2	Improve speed of production	Upgrade factory with new manufacturing equipment	Staff frightened of new technology	3
3	Raise volumes output		Environmental impact of new technology	1
1	Control rising maintenance costs		Cost	3
			Disruption	1

Total: 10   Total: 11

Once you have carried out an analysis, you can decide whether your project is viable. In the example above, you might initially question whether it is worth going ahead with the plan. Where you have already decided to carry out a project, Force Field Analysis can help you to work out how to improve its probability of success. Here you have two choices:

• To reduce the strength of the forces opposing a project, or
• To increase the forces pushing a project

Often the most elegant solution is the first: just trying to force change through may cause its own problems. People can be uncooperative if change is forced on them.If you had to implement the project in the example above, the analysis might suggest a number of changes to the initial plan:

• By training staff (increase cost by 1) you could eliminate fear of technology (reduce fear by 2)
• It would be useful to show staff that change is necessary for business survival (new force in favor, +2)
• Staff could be shown that new machines would introduce variety and interest to their jobs (new force, +1)
• You could raise wages to reflect new productivity (cost +1, loss of overtime -2)
• Slightly different machines with filters to eliminate pollution could be installed (environmental impact -1)

These changes would swing the balance from 11:10 (against the plan), to 8:13 (in favor of the plan).

Key points:
Force Field Analysis is a useful technique for looking at all the forces for and against a plan. It helps you to weigh the importance of these factors and decide whether a plan is worth implementing. Where you have decided to carry out a plan, Force Field Analysis helps you identify changes that you could make to improve it.

Critical Success Factors

Identifying the things that really matter for success matters. So many important matters can compete for your attention in business that it's often difficult to see the "wood for the trees". What's more, it can be extremely difficult to get everyone in the team pulling in the same direction and focusing on the true essentials. CSFs are the essential areas of activity that must be performed well if you are to achieve the mission, objectives or goals for your business or project. By identifying your Critical Success Factors, you can create a common point of reference to help you direct and measure the success of your business or project.

As a common point of reference, CSFs help everyone in the team to know exactly what's most important. And this helps people perform their own work in the right context and so pull together towards the same overall aims. Critical Success Factors are strongly related to the mission and strategic goals of your business or project. Whereas the mission and goals focus on the aims and what is to be achieved, Critical Success Factors focus on the most important areas and get to the very heart of both what is to be achieved and how you will achieve it.

Using the Tool: An Example

CSFs are best understood by example. Consider a produce store "Farm Fresh Produce", whose mission is:

> *"To become the number one produce store in Main Street by selling the highest quality, freshest farm produce, from farm to customer in under 24 hours on 75% of our range and with 98% customer satisfaction."*

The strategic objectives of Farm Fresh are to:
- Gain market share locally of 25%.
- Achieve fresh supplies of "farm to customer" in 24 hours for 75% of products.
- Sustain a customer satisfaction rate of 98%.
- Expand product range to attract more customers.
- Have sufficient store space to accommodate the range of products that customers want.

In order to identify possible CSFs, we must examine the mission and objectives and see which areas of the business need attention so that they can be achieved. We can start by brainstorming what the Critical Success Factors might be (these are the "Candidate" CSFs.)

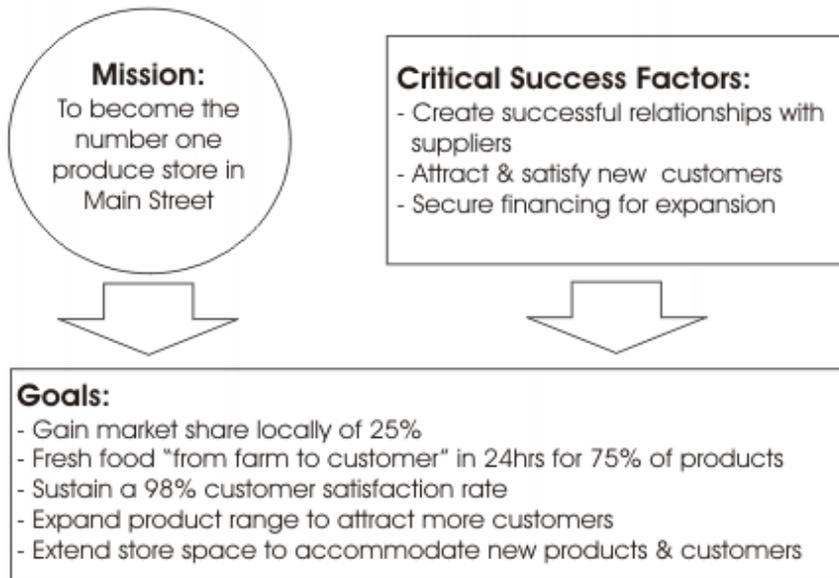| Objective	Candidate Critical Success Factors
Gain market share locally of 25%	Increase competitiveness versus other local stores Attract new customers
Achieve fresh supplies from "farm to customer" in 24 hours for 75% of products	Sustain successful relationships with local suppliers
Sustain a customer satisfaction rate of 98%	Retain staff and keep up customer-focused training
Expand product range to attract more customers	Source new products locally
Extend store space to accommodate new products and customers	Secure financing for expansion Manage building work and any disruption to the business

Once you have a list of Candidate CSFs, it's time to consider what is absolutely essential and so identify the truly Critical Success Factors.

And this is certainly the case for Farm Fresh Produce. One CSF that we identify from the candidate list is "Sustain successful relationships with local suppliers." This is absolutely essential to ensure freshness and to source new products.

Another CSF is to attract new customers. Without new customers, the store will be unable to expand to increase market share.

A third CSF is financing for expansion. The store's objectives cannot be met without the funds to invest in expanding the store space.

Figure 1: Critical Success Factors, Missions & Goals
for "Farm Fresh Produce"

Mission:
To become the number one produce store in Main Street

Critical Success Factors:
- Create successful relationships with suppliers
- Attract & satisfy new customers
- Secure financing for expansion

Goals:
- Gain market share locally of 25%
- Fresh food "from farm to customer" in 24hrs for 75% of products
- Sustain a 98% customer satisfaction rate
- Expand product range to attract more customers
- Extend store space to accommodate new products & customers

Tip: How Many CSFs?
There is no hard and fast rule but it's useful to limit the number of CSFs to five or fewer essentials. This helps you maintain the impact of your CSFs, and help give direction and prioritization to other elements of your business or project strategy.

Using the Tool: Summary Steps

Step One: Establish your business's or project's mission and strategic goals .

Step Two: For each strategic goal, ask yourself "what area of business or project activity is essential to achieve this goal?" The answers to the question are your candidate CSFs.

Tip: How Many CSFs?
To make sure you consider all types of possible CSFs, you can use Rockart's CSF types as a checklist.

- • Industry - these factors result from specific industry characteristics. These are the things that the organization must do to remain competitive.
- • Environmental - these factors result from macro-environmental influences on an organization. Things like the business climate, the economy, competitors, and technological advancements are included in this category.
- • Strategic - these factors result from the specific competitive strategy chosen by the organization. The way in which the company chooses to position themselves, market themselves, whether they are high volume low cost or low volume high cost producers, etc.
- • Temporal - these factors result from the organization's internal forces. Specific barriers, challenges, directions, and influences will determine these CSFs.

Step Three: Evaluate the list of candidate CSFs to find the absolute essential elements for achieving success - these are your Critical Success Factors. As you identify and evaluate candidate CSFs, you may uncover some new strategic objectives or more detailed objectives. So you may need to define your mission, objectives and CSFs iteratively.

Step Four: Identify how you will monitor and measure each of the CSFs.

Step Five: Communicate your CSFs along with the other important elements of your business or project's strategy.

Step Six: Keep monitoring and reevaluating your CSFs to ensure you keep moving towards your aims. Indeed, whilst CSFs are sometimes less tangible than measurable goals, it is useful to identify as specifically as possible how you can measure or monitor each one. CSFs is a very iterative process. Your mission, strategic goals and CSFs are intrinsically linked and each will be refined as you develop them.

Key Points

Critical Success Factors are the areas of your business or project that are absolutely essential to it success. By identifying and communicating these CSFs, you can help ensure your business or project is well-focused and that you avoid wasting effort and resources on less important areas. By making CSFs explicit, and communicating them to stakeholders, can help keep the business and project on track towards common aims and goals.

Affinity Diagrams

Organizing Ideas Into Common Themes can be extremely useful in program planning, development and evaluation. It is probably never a bad thing to have too many ideas? Probably not, but if you've ever experienced information overload or struggled to know where to begin with a wealth of data you've been given, you may have wondered how you can use all of these ideas effectively. When there's lots of "stuff" coming at you, it is hard to sort through everything and organize the information in a way that makes sense and helps you make decisions.

Whether you're brainstorming ideas, trying to solve a problem or analyzing a situation, when you are dealing with lots of information from a variety of sources, you can end up spending a huge amount of time trying to assimilate all the little bits and pieces. Rather than letting the disjointed information get the better of you, you can use an affinity diagram to help you organize it. Also called the KJ method, after its developer Kawakita Jiro (a Japanese anthropologist) an affinity diagram helps to synthesize large amounts of data by finding relationships between ideas. The information is then gradually structured from the bottom up into meaningful groups. From there you can clearly "see" what you have, and then begin your analysis or come to a decision.

Figure 1

Random Ideas   **Affinity Diagram**

Theme 1   Theme 2   Theme 2
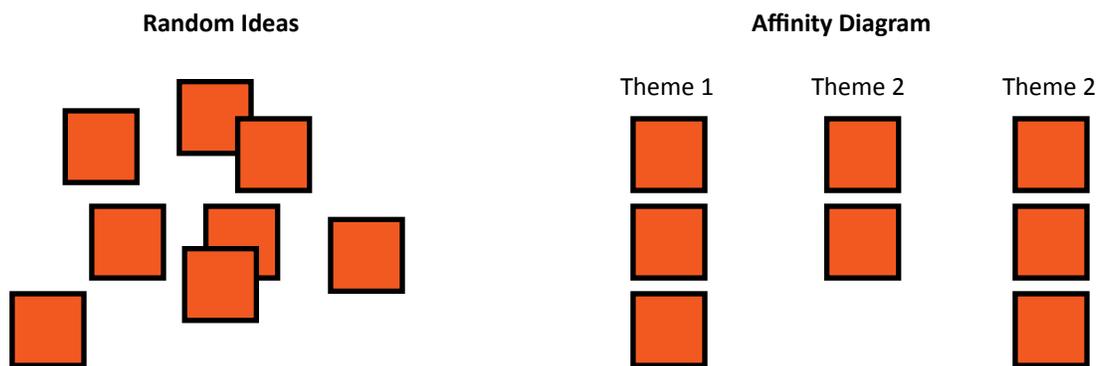
Affinity diagrams can be used to:
- Draw out common themes from a large amount of information.
- Discover previously unseen connections between various ideas or information.
- Brainstorm root causes and solutions to a problem.

Because many decision-making exercises begin with brainstorming, this is one of the most common applications of affinity diagrams. After a brainstorming session there are usually pages of ideas. These won't have been censored or edited in any way, many of them will be very similar, and many will also be closely related to others in a variety of ways. What an affinity diagram does is start to group the ideas into themes.

From the chaos of the randomly generated ideas comes an insight into the common threads that link groups of them together. From there the solution or best idea often emerges quite naturally. This is why affinity diagrams are so powerful and why the Japanese Union of Scientists and Engineers consider them one of the "seven management tools."

Affinity diagrams are not the domain of brainstorming alone though. They can be used in any situation where:

- The solution is not readily apparent.
- You want to reach a consensus or decision and have a lot of variables to consider, concepts to discuss, ideas to connect, or opinions to incorporate.
- There is a large volume of information to sort through.
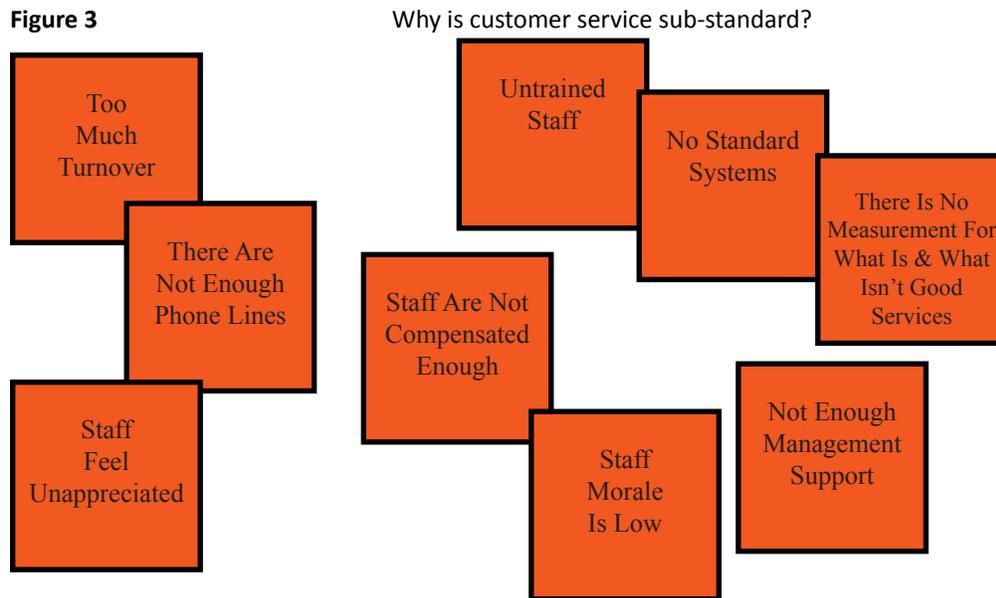
How to Use the Tool

1. Describe the problem or issue:

Figure 2

Customer service is sub-standard.

2. Generate ideas by brainstorming. Write each idea on a separate sticky note and put these on a wall or flip chart. Remember to emphasize volume, suspend judgment, and piggyback other ideas.
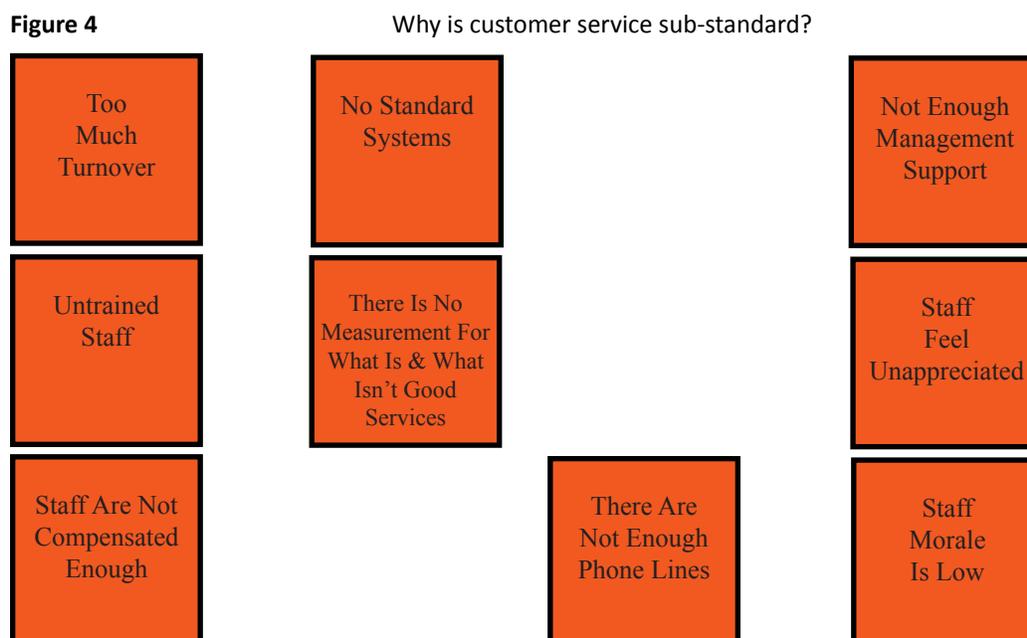
Figure 3   Why is customer service sub-standard?

Too Much Turnover

There Are Not Enough Phone Lines

Staff Feel Unappreciated

Untrained Staff

No Standard Systems

There Is No Measurement For What Is & What Isn't Good Services

Staff Are Not Compensated Enough

Staff Morale Is Low

Not Enough Management Support

3. Sort ideas into natural themes by asking:
   • What ideas are similar?
   • Is this idea connected to any of the others?

If you're working in a team:
   • Separate into smaller groups of 3 to 4 people.
   • Sort the ideas IN SILENCE so that no one is influenced by anyone else's comments.
   • Keep moving the cards around until consensus is reached.

Figure 4   Why is customer service sub-standard?

Too Much Turnover

No Standard Systems

Not Enough Management Support

Untrained Staff

There Is No Measurement For What Is & What Isn't Good Services

Staff Feel Unappreciated

Staff Are Not Compensated Enough

There Are Not Enough Phone Lines

Staff Morale Is Low

4. Create total group consensus:
   • Discuss the shared meaning of each of the sorted groups.
   • Continue until consensus is reached.
   • If some ideas do not fit into any theme, separate them as "stand-alone" ideas.
   • If some ideas fit into more than one theme, create a duplicate card and put it in the proper group.
   • Try to limit the total number of themes to between five and nine.

5. Create theme cards (also called affinity cards or header cards):
   • Create a short 3-5 word description for the relationship.
   • If you're working in a group, do this together, out loud.
   • Write this theme/header on a blank card and place at the top of the group it describes.
   • Create a "super-headers" where necessary to group themes.
   • Use a "sub-header" card where necessary as well.

Figure 3   Why is customer service sub-standard?

Human Resource Issues	Lack of Standard Processes & Measurment	Workplace Culture	Resources and Tools
Too Much Turnover	No Standard Systems	Not Enough Management Support	There Are Not Enough Phone Lines
Untrained Staff	There Is No Measurement For What Is & What Isn't Good Services	Staff Feel Unappreciated	
Staff Are Not Compensated Enough		Staff Morale Is Low	

6. Continue to group the themes/headers until you have reached the broadest, but still meaningful, categories possible:
   • Draw lines connecting the super-headers, themes/headers, and sub-headers.
   • You'll end up with a hierarchical structure that shows, at a glance, where the relationships are.

Tip:
Grouping ideas under headings, and then grouping headings under super-headers in an affinity diagram is a practical way of "chunking" information generated in brainstorming sessions, during process mapping, or even a planning exercise. Click here for more information on Chunking.

Key Points

Affinity diagrams are great tools for assimilating and understanding large amounts of information. When you work through the process of creating relationships and working backward from detailed information to broad themes, you get an insight you would not otherwise find.

The next time you are confronting a large amount of information or number of ideas and you feel overwhelmed at first glance, use the affinity diagram approach to discover all the hidden linkages. And when you cannot see the forest for the trees, an affinity diagram may be exactly what you need to get back in focus.

The McKinsey 7S Framework

The McKinsey 7S Framework helps to ensure that all parts of your organization work in harmony. How do you go about analyzing how well your organization is positioned to achieve its intended objective? This is a question that has been asked for many years, and there are many different answers. Some approaches look at internal factors, others look at external ones, some combine these perspectives, and others look for congruence between various aspects of the organization being studied. Ultimately, the issue comes down to which factors to study.

While some models of organizational effectiveness go in and out of fashion, one that has persisted is the McKinsey 7S framework. Developed in the early 1980s by Tom Peters and Robert Waterman, two consultants working at the McKinsey & Company consulting firm, the basic premise of the model is that there are seven internal aspects of an organization that need to be aligned if it is to be successful.

The 7S model can be used in a wide variety of situations where an alignment perspective is useful, for example to help you:

- Improve the performance of a company;
- Examine the likely effects of future changes within a company;
- Align departments and processes during a merger or acquisition; or
- Determine how best to implement a proposed strategy.

The McKinsey 7S model can be applied to elements of a team or a project as well. The alignment issues apply, regardless of how you decide to define the scope of the areas you study.

The Seven Elements

The McKinsey 7S model involves seven interdependent factors which are categorized as either "hard" or "soft" elements:

| Hard Elements	Soft Elements
Strategy	Shared Values
Structure	Skills
Systems	Style
	Staff

"Hard" elements are easier to define or identify and management can directly influence them: These are strategy statements; organization charts and reporting lines; and formal processes and IT systems. "Soft" elements, on the other hand, can be more difficult to describe, and are less tangible and more influenced by culture. However, these soft elements are as important as the hard elements if the organization is going to be successful.

Let's look at each of the elements specifically:

- Strategy: the plan devised to maintain and build competitive advantage over the competition.
- Structure: the way the organization is structured and who reports to whom.
- Systems: the daily activities and procedures that staff members engage in to get the job done.
- Shared Values: called "superordinate goals" when the model was first developed, these are the core values of the company that are evidenced in the corporate culture and the general work ethic.
- Style: the style of leadership adopted.
- Staff: the employees and their general capabilities.
- Skills: the actual skills and competencies of the employees working for the company.

Figure 1: The McKinsey 7S Model
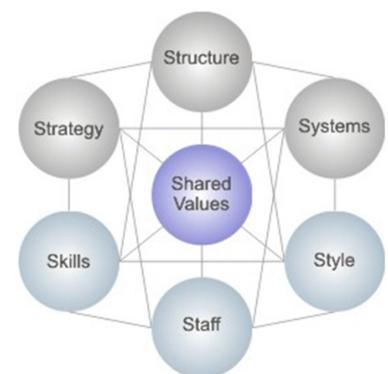
Placing Shared Values in the middle of the model emphasizes that these values are central to the development of all the other critical elements. The company's structure, strategy, systems, style, staff and skills all stem from why the organization was originally created, and what it stands for. The original vision of the company was formed from the values of the creators. As the values change, so do all the other elements.

How to Use the Model

The model is based on the theory that, for an organization to perform well, these seven elements need to be aligned and mutually reinforcing. So, the model can be used to help identify what needs to be realigned to improve performance, or to maintain alignment (and performance) during other types of change.

Whatever the type of change - restructuring, new processes, organizational merger, new systems, change of leadership, and so on - the model can be used to understand how the organizational elements are interrelated, and so ensure that the wider impact of changes made in one area is taken into consideration.

You can use the 7S model to help analyze the current situation (Point A), a proposed future situation (Point B) and to identify gaps and inconsistencies between them. It's then a question of adjusting and tuning the elements of the 7S model to ensure that your organization works effectively and well once you reach the desired endpoint.

Sounds simple? Well, of course not: Changing your organization probably will not be simple at all! Whole books and methodologies are dedicated to analyzing organizational strategy, improving performance and managing change. The 7S model is a good framework to help you ask the right questions - but it won't give you all the answers. For that you'll need to bring together the right knowledge, skills and experience.

When it comes to asking the right questions, we've developed a Mind Tools checklist and a matrix to keep track of how the seven elements align with each other. Supplement these with your own questions, based on your organization's specific circumstances and accumulated wisdom.

7S Checklist Questions

Here are some of the questions that you'll need to explore to help you understand your situation in terms of the 7S framework. Use them to analyze your current (Point A) situation first, and then repeat the exercise for your proposed situation (Point B).

Strategy:
- What is our strategy?
- How to we intend to achieve our objectives?
- How do we deal with competitive pressure?
- How are changes in customer demands dealt with?
- How is strategy adjusted for environmental issues?

Structure:
- How is the company/team divided?
- What is the hierarchy?
- How do the various departments coordinate activities?
- How do the team members organize and align themselves?
- Is decision making and controlling centralized or decentralized? Is this as it should be, given what we're doing?
- Where are the lines of communication? Explicit and implicit?

Systems:
- What are the main systems that run the organization? Consider financial and HR systems as well as communications and document storage.
- Where are the controls and how are they monitored and evaluated?
- What internal rules and processes does the team use to keep on track?

Shared Values:
- What are the core values?
- What is the corporate/team culture?
- How strong are the values?
- What are the fundamental values that the company/team was built on?

Style:

- How participative is the management/leadership style?
- How effective is that leadership?
- Do employees/team members tend to be competitive or cooperative?
- Are there real teams functioning within the organization or are they just nominal groups?

Staff:

- What positions or specializations are represented within the team?
- What positions need to be filled?
- Are there gaps in required competencies?

Skills:

- What are the strongest skills represented within the company/team?
- Are there any skills gaps?
- What is the company/team known for doing well?
- Do the current employees/team members have the ability to do the job?
- How are skills monitored and assessed?

7S Matrix Questions

Using the information you have gathered, now examine where there are gaps and inconsistencies between elements. Remember you can use this to look at either your current or your desired organization.

Develop a matrix that to check off alignment between each of the elements as you go through the following steps:

- Start with your Shared Values: Are they consistent with your structure, strategy, and systems? If not, what needs to change?
- Then look at the hard elements. How well does each one support the others? Identify where changes need to be made.
- Next look at the other soft elements. Do they support the desired hard elements? Do they support one another? If not, what needs to change?
- As you adjust and align the elements, you'll need to use an iterative (and often time consuming) process of making adjustments, and then re-analyzing how that impacts other elements and their alignment. The end result of better performance will be worth it.

Key points:

The McKinsey 7Ss model is one that can be applied to almost any organizational or team effectiveness issue. If something within your organization or team isn't working, chances are there is inconsistency between some of the elements identified by this classic model. Once these inconsistencies are revealed, you can work to align the internal elements to make sure they are all contributing to the shared goals and values. The process of analyzing where you are right now in terms of these elements is worthwhile in and of itself. But by taking this analysis to the next level and determining the ultimate state for each of the factors, you can really move your organization or team forward.