

Application Guide

UTILIZING SYSTEMS TO EMPOWER PEOPLE AND DRIVE RESULTS



BOTTOM LINE:

The systems within your organization will dictate behaviors, shape culture, and determine results.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

I. The systems that we create will either propel our organizations or hold us back.

- A. The right systems enhance, not impede, creativity.
- B. Strong systems fuel and sustain innovation and positive change.
- C. Poor systems impede progress by facilitating unhelpful behavior.

II. **Systems control behaviors** because they create and galvanize behaviors, whether they're the right behaviors or not.

III. Every organization is perfectly designed to get the results it's currently getting because **organizations do what they're designed to do.**

- A. The best thing a leader can do is to be a student of organizations that are effective and efficient in terms of getting things done.
- B. When results are not what you want, avoid blaming individual people. Instead discover what systems are operating in the background.
 - 1. Oftentimes there are things baked into systems that create problematic behaviors.
 - 2. We can blame people all day long, but until somebody addresses the systems, the problem is never going to be resolved.

IV. Systems are often invisible until they fail. In order to see the systems within an organization, leaders must ask three key questions:

- A. **What's working?** Identify what's running smoothly and why.
- B. **What keeps breaking?** Pinpoint recurring problems or inefficiencies.
- C. **What's in the way?** Discover unwritten or outdated rules that hinder progress.

V. Organizational systems and organizational culture are **interdependent.**

- A. Working to improve organizational culture without addressing the systems behind it oftentimes is an exercise in futility.
- B. Systems determine our culture because organizational culture is essentially behavior: how we do things, how we communicate, how often we have meetings, etc.

VI. Questions to ask to help you put systems in place that **reinforce behaviors** that you want:

- A. What are the behaviors you desire? What are the systems that facilitate the behaviors? And where do we have systems in place that get in the way of the behaviors that facilitate our output?
- B. Understand the sequence and then commit to what needs to be done.
 - 1. If you want to be innovative, ask yourself, "What organizational behaviors facilitate innovation?"
 - 2. Then back up and ask, "What can we put in place systematically that motivates people and

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15-YEAR CELEBRATION



creates those behaviors?”

VII. Systems must be **continually evaluated and adjusted** to meet current needs. What works today may not work tomorrow.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION OR TEAM DISCUSSION

1. What systems in the organization are currently working so well that they’re almost invisible?
2. What recurring issues suggest there is a system that needs improvement?
3. Are there outdated or unwritten rules in the organization that are hindering progress?
4. What systems could be put in place to encourage collaboration and innovation?
5. What systems could be put in place to better address and resolve interpersonal conflicts within the team?
6. What processes do we have in place to regularly monitor and adjust our systems?

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