



COMPETENT MANAGER, WRONG ORGANIZATION: WHY DOES IT HAPPEN?

Being in a non-compatible organization can be a nightmare for an otherwise competent manager. The experience can be stressful, frustrating, disappointing, stifling, and generally unpleasant. Such an experience is often accompanied by role conflict, job stress, burnout, and performance dysfunctions. If you have experienced such a puzzling environment, how can you make sense out of what has happened? Were you engaged in managerial work? Was everyone on the same page? Let's analyze the nightmare.

Organizational Types

Considering the previous blog posts on communication pitfalls, we now add the "organizational type" into the mix. It's notable that the communication pitfalls discussed in the communications blog posts also describe temperament and psychological type issues directly applicable to determining an organizational type where one might thrive, not flounder. I'll use the framework developed by Miles and Snow* as modified for this blog post. This provides the basis to define and understand organizational strategy, structure and process as related to the managerial differences, preferences, and demands of each type of organization.

*Miles, RE and Snow, CC, Organizational Strategy, Structure, and Process, McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York 1978

Keep in mind that one type of organization can consist of sub-organizations of several different types but the operating infrastructure (see Figure 1-The Operating Infrastructure) will be functionally the same for each. For example, government organizations can operate top to bottom as bureaucracies, but an entrepreneurial organization may have bureaucratic sub-organizations to handle finances or government interfaces.

Defender Organization (Government bureaucracies are the classic example)

In this type organization the client, technology, product, or service is narrow with an emphasis on stability and efficiency in operations. The implicit assumption by managers of effectiveness gives rise to the concentration on efficiency with an attendant ignorance on developments outside their general business area, and outside their organization in the sense that they may be aware of developments but would not respond to them. This sometimes appears as the “not invented here” syndrome. The resulting culture in this organization is one of strict control and doing things by the book as deviations can only lead to inefficiency. The psychological type identified as extraverted-thinking-judging would probably be most at home in this organization that dwells on evaluation and control of virtually everything. There is also a tendency toward upward loyalty and downward enforcement of policy (dogma) that one finds in the thinking psychology. This leads to peculiar symptoms of neglect toward entities not in the vertical chain (e.g., staff personnel) and subordinates.

This organization spends a lot of time trying to apply technology to improve efficiency relative to needs of the main entities. Others are not necessarily served by the chosen technology because of the narrow focus in its selection. The

allocated budgets are insufficient to purchase expanded technology, and human resources (personnel) may be insufficient to develop proficiency in the new technologies. Sometimes the new technologies are purchased and simply turned over to the organization's second-rate entities for them to make the best of it. The major effort is to maintain the technology for peak efficiency and minimize variability and uncertainty in the technical systems.

The above-described orientation presents significant problems in this organization when new clients, products, services, or technology must be addressed. The basis of this organization cannot support this kind of change nor can the kind of personnel who generally accrue to the defender organization. So, when change strikes the defender organization, chaos can result, i.e., they lose control.

Considering the total character of the defender type organization, the most successful psychological type would likely be the extraverted-thinking-judging type. The intuitive type would be frustrated, and introverted types would most likely have significant communication problems in such a rigid, standardized operation so grounded in narrowly focused clients, products, services, and technologies. This organization is prone to becoming a "good old boys club" due to the narrow psychological need that also produces group think.

Prospector Organization (practically the opposite of the Defender Organization)

This organizational type is typically characterized as the innovative, market leader with clear capability to find and develop new opportunities. The development will take place in clients, products, services, and technologies. There is obvious risk involved in this type of activity and failures can be expected. This type of organization can be viewed negatively if it is part of a larger defender type

organization. This negativism is enhanced due to the differences in the psychological types found in the two organizations.

The prospector organization operates in a constant state of change or development. The dynamic fluid character of clients, products, services, and technologies requires the abilities of the extraverted-intuitive-perceiving psychological type. The prospector must acquire a wide-range of external information to pattern into new opportunities. It often initiates change in the industry it serves, so strategic process is important. This is in sharp contrast to the defender organization. This activity of a prospector organization is known as data seeking and highlights the strength of the intuitive-perceiving psychological type.

The control system is results oriented. Managers clear roadblocks and provide resources to the personnel executing strategy. Efficiencies in organizational processes are not as important as effectiveness of products and services. This requires a decentralized control system, but this is natural because the live action information that is the life blood of the prospector organization is also decentralized. The information flow preference is for short, horizontal feedback loops, again requiring decentralization. This matches well with the characteristics of the extraverted-intuitive-perceiving psychological type.

Change does not create anxiety in the type of person suited to the prospector organization. Common beliefs about pressure and stress do not apply.

Conversely, the extraverted-thinking-judging type would get ulcers. Introverts would probably suffer disappointment and sadness as their tenuous hold on the objective environment would disappear completely, and the shifting spotlight

would always fall on the one who best understands the needs in the current objective environment.

The major negative in this organization is significant risk due to inefficiency, unstable operations and structure that may require matrix management at times. Overdevelopment of products, services, and technologies beyond what the clients will really use or even want can waste capital and human resource.

Analyzer Organization (A hybrid designed to minimize risk and maximize profits)

The emphasis in this organization is on a mixture of stable and changing clients, products, services, and technologies. Successful imitation through extensive contact with the external environment, through surveillance mechanisms and networks, keeps this organization's strategic process up to date. They are avid followers of proven change, and pursue growth mainly by expanding their client base first, then introducing new product, service or technology.

The psychological type best suited for this organization is likely to be the extraverted-feeling-perceiving type with an auxiliary in intuition. There is need for the extraverted-thinking-judging type in the stabilized business areas of the organization. The intuitive type is not well suited for this organization because the creative, innovative talents of this type individual are not in demand. The basic approach in this organization for product and service development is through imitation.

The analyzer organization is like the defender in the stable product/client areas, but otherwise, like the prospector, they prefer to use moving teams (like application specialists) because their forte is review and comparison to standards. This is perfectly consistent with imitation. The individual teams are coordinated

through an applied research group. They match the organization's technical capabilities with new products desired by product managers for the organization's clients. This organizational type can be viewed as a transitory type one might encounter in changing a defender or prospector organization from their pure states to states dictated by the business environment. In such a case, the technical function is to standardize (make more efficient) the imitated products and services.

Planning tasks are intensive and comprehensive and lead by the marketing and production needs. The tasks are designed to match stable product and service sectors to production capability and existing markets. In this approach, plans are established and executed and results evaluated. Improvements by the applied research group include not only these results but information gleaned from the monitored external prospector organizations. By so doing, new and improved products can be taken quickly through development and into production. At this time, the planning begins anew for updating the marketing campaign.

To execute such a mix of requirements, a matrix structure generally emerges for stability and change control. This consists of functional divisions of specialists and product staffs in separate, self-contained groups. These are coordinated (matrixed) giving rise to the hybrid structure. Control of the self-contained groups within the analyzer organization is more difficult because of the diversity of the differentiated groups. Different policies, practices, and operating procedures will apply. Functional units are centralized and budget controlled because efficiency is expected. This leads to the necessity of vertical information systems for internal operations. By contrast, product and service groups have decentralized, results-oriented controls because of new product and technology goals. Since live action

information is required in product groups, horizontal information networks are preferred in these groups.

Obviously, the decision-making group must utilize different control mechanisms and balance concerns about efficiency against effectiveness to preserve the organization as a whole.

Implicit Organization

This type of organization exists when it becomes necessary to launch a unique product or service usually spearheaded by uniquely talented and capable individuals. Timing is critical so organizational strategy, structure and process are implied (on the fly) in the activities necessary to get the product and service to market as soon as possible. With success, the implied organization morphs into one of the other organizations for lasting effectiveness and efficiency.

Reactor Organization (A tacit disorganization-the emperor has no clothes)

See Table 1 to contrast the reactor organization with the other organizational types.

Tabular Summary

The following table summarizes the organizational strategy, structure and process for the organizational types discussed above.

TABLE 1-ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGY, STRUCTURE, AND PROCESS

CHARACTERISTICS	TYPE OF ORGANIZATION				
	<i>Implicit</i>	<i>Prospector</i>	<i>Analyzer</i>	<i>Defender</i>	<i>Reactor</i>
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrow Scope • Network of Contacts • Experience and Expertise • Name Recognition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovation • Creates need • ID Threats • Gap Strategy: A to B • Market Definer • External Drivers • Risk Tolerant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imitation • Strategic Focus • Adapt Proven Technology • Risk Averse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrow Scope • Stability and Efficiency • Dogma, Policy and Procedure • Entrenched Practices 	Wishful Thinking
TECHNICAL APPROACH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem Statement and Solution • Applied Technology • Smarter and how to get it done 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology Application • Evolve and Grow Services • Big Picture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate Imitation • Applied Research • Develop Efficiency in product and services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assign a Champion (to make a problem go away) • Efficiency First • Risk Averse • Control Change 	Outdated
MANAGEMENT TEAM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal • Ad Hoc • Evolving • Diverse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decentralized • Change Control • Teaming • Talent in Staff • Client Oriented • Horizontal Integration across business areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed Planning in Marketing and Production • Vertical Structure for Stability • Integrates Subsidiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top Down (kiss up, kick down cliché) • Central Planning • Problem finding micro mgmt. • Training Facilitated • Deference to Specialists • Line Authority and Control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lacking In: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Problem ID -Markets -Technology -Strategy -Goals -Change Control • Cannot meet basic purpose
DECISION TEAM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals in spotlight • Vertical Alliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product and Service Driven • Rainmakers • Business and Market Leaders • Unique Staff Talent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production and Marketing • Applied Research • Driven by Area of Imitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stable, Long Term • Top Managers • Financial Managers • Main Product and Service Managers 	All talk no action: "where we have been, where we are, and where we are going" makes them feel good and gives them an appearance of wisdom.

The Nature of Managerial Work

The last topic to add to the managerial milieu will be the nature of managerial work. The best framework to capture the essence of managerial work for integration into the mix is based on the research of Mintzberg* as modified for this blog post which means including Figure 1-The Operating Infrastructure (OI) that defines the information flow network based on management system functions. We can then assemble all these elements into a matrix to help us understand if the combination of organizational type, managerial work requirements, and our own temperament/psychological type have us in the right place or the wrong place and what options to consider to improve our predicament.

How About the Following for a Start

If your management style is based on command and control, you're really just a supervisor. Get a new way to think about things. Managers chart the strategic course for their organization and lead their organization to the vision at the end of that strategy. In order to do this the management system must communicate the requirements to achieve the vision and provide the means of implementing the series of decisions embodied in the strategy to achieve the vision. Managers must also remove any roadblocks along the way. Communication takes place through the organizational structure of the management system that defines how information flows in the organization (OI). This provides management and supervision with an operating structure that will support the effective and efficient functioning of the organization. The "means of implementing" are the removal of roadblocks and allocations of resources at the

*Mintzberg, H, The Nature of Managerial Work, Harper and Row, New York 1973.

right place and time in the right amount to the right person. In concise terms this is what the management system must support, and the manager must have the vision and leadership qualities (leave the command-and-control qualities to the supervisors) that provide the driving force for the management system.

Managerial Functions and Practice

In the early 1970's Dr. Henry Mintzberg defined three functional areas comprised of ten practical areas that defined the essence of managerial work. While elaborate management theories, command and control, and groupthink traps dominated the management mindset in the United States, especially after the Korean War, Dr. Mintzberg's thorough research on the matter defined the work of managers. His work provides the basis for a manager's guiding principles in understanding what needs to be done by a manager to do his job and these are applicable even today because Dr. Mintzberg got it right.

First, let's review the purposes of having managers. If we organize and structure operations in a logical manner and write administrative procedures to guide the conduct of business, and if we hire personnel who have the functional capabilities that we need to execute the action plan of the organization, why would we need a manager at all? There are four primary purposes for having managers as follows:

1. The turbulent, changing environment will necessitate change in the organization and the person that controls that change is the manager. Managers develop the strategy for controlling change in their organization.
2. The manager is the person who provides the unprogrammed interaction to address imperfections and random events that affect the organization's

operations.

3. The organizational growth can be transient and transitional in nature giving rise to a big picture thinking that leads to strategy development and program implementation. The attendant internal changes that occur in an organization as it goes from inception to maturity require the input of a manager to make sure things happen correctly.
4. Human cognitive problems, the psychological types, the varying degrees of ability of individuals give rise to the internal human conflict. It is not possible to program the handling of the human element by procedure or checklist. We can do that to a certain extent, but the essence of managing the human resource requires an entity who can handle the unprogrammed, complex problem situation, and again, this is the manager.

Now that we understand the purposes of having managers to begin with, what might we expect from them? Again, from Dr. Mintzberg's research, we can expect the following from managers:

1. Ensure that his organization serves its prime purpose; the efficient delivery of products and services. We would expect the manager to deliver the basic mission of the organization regardless of organizational type.
2. The manager must maintain the stability of his organization's operations to control the effective and efficient execution of the basic mission of the organization and to relieve anxiety in the work force.
3. By focusing on the big picture, we expect the manager to take charge of his organization's strategy making system and adapt his organization in a controlled way to its changing environment.

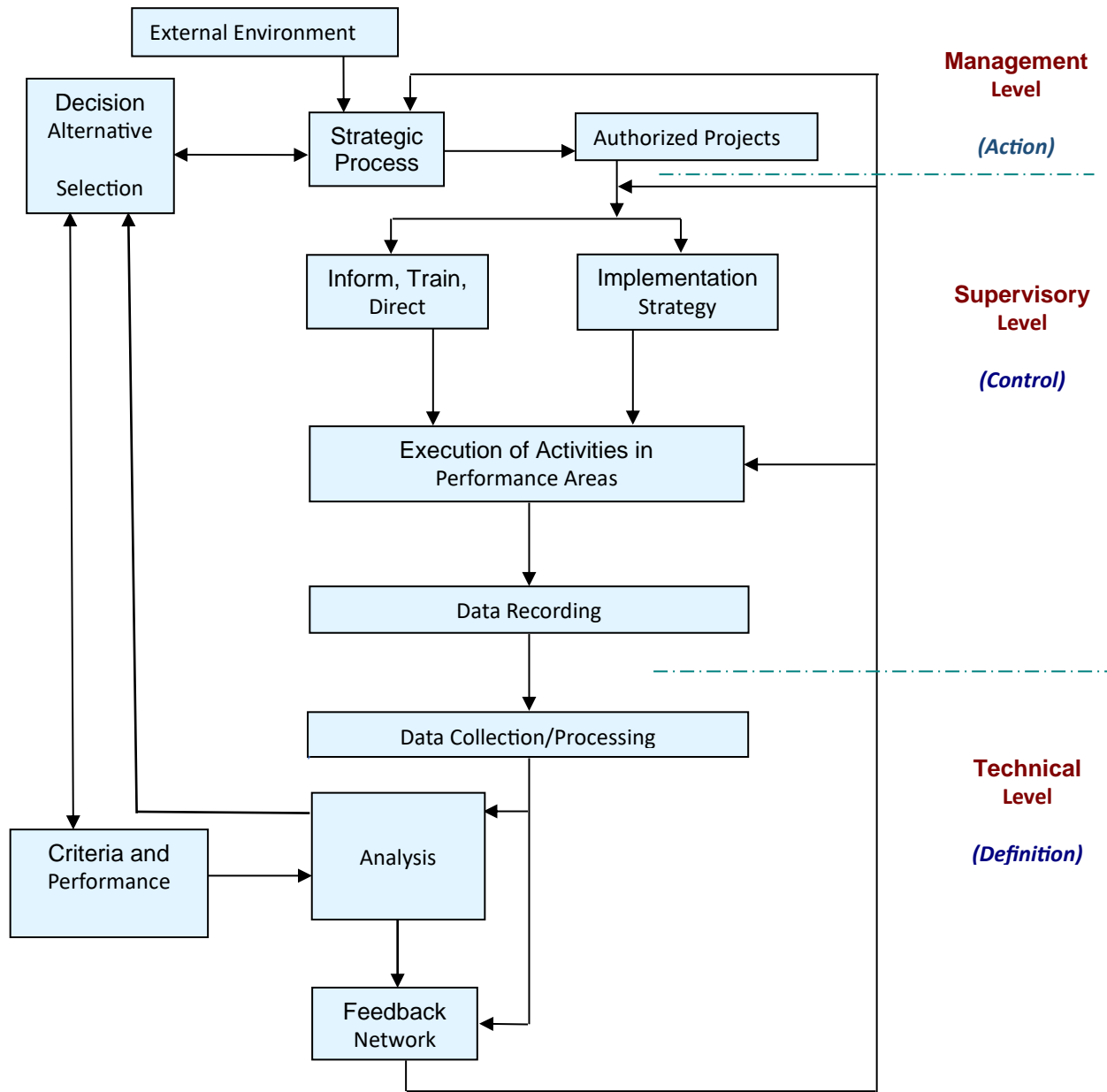
4. The manager must ensure that his organization serves the ends of the organization's principal stakeholders and handle public relations. In so doing he must also shield his group from the external environment to avoid distractions and misrepresentations of his organization.
5. The manager serves as the key informational link between his organization and its environment. He establishes information flow within his organization and provides information about his organization to the outside world and vice versa. He guarantees that the information flow network (OI) including all feedback networks is functional in his organization.
6. Finally, we expect the manager to ensure that the personnel within the organization know their job and how they're supposed to do it. He ensures that the personnel understand that their goals and objectives must be linked to the goals and objectives of upper management.

These four purposes and six expectations regarding managers lead to the identification, based on actual observation, of three functional areas comprised of ten activities that define the essence of managerial work as shown in Table 2, The Nature of Managerial Work. As you can see, the purposes and expectations regarding managers listed above are somewhat conceptual, but in Table 2 we see the coalescing of these concepts into actual functions observable in the day-to-day activities of managers. This is the nature of managerial work and it is operationalized conceptually as shown in Figure 1, The Operating Infrastructure.

Table 2-The Nature of Managerial Work-The relationship of functional management areas and specific tasks associated with each based on the purposes of having managers and the expectations placed on management performance.

<u>INTERPERSONAL FUNCTION</u> Related to formal authority	<u>INFORMATIONAL FUNCTION</u> Receiving and disseminating information	<u>DECISIONAL FUNCTION</u> The making of significant decisions
<u>FIGUREHEAD</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance of duties that are interpersonal. • Represents the organization’s niche. 	<u>MONITOR</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information seeking to detect change, identify problems and opportunities. • Build the knowledge base about the organization’s area. • Be informed when information is needed. 	<u>STRATEGIST</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate and implement controlled change in the organization. • Define the gap from where you are to where you want to be and specify the series of decisions (projects) to get there.
<u>LEADER</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides guidance and motivation. • Defines the work culture for the organization. 	<u>DISSEMINATOR</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sends external information into the organization. • Sends internal information to subordinates (key to delegation). • Distinguishes between factual and value (preference) information for the organization’s use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>PROBLEM SOLVER-</u> Involuntary situations and change partially beyond manager’s control. • Relieve pressures too great to ignore. • Remove barriers to progress.
<u>LIAISON</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horizontal relationships. • Integration across departmental lines. • Eliminate command and control structures. • Remove roadblocks to progress. 	<u>SPOKESMAN</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transmits information out to the environment. • Formal authority to speak on behalf of the organization. • Has information to do so effectively since the manager is the nerve center. 	<u>RESOURCE ALLOCATOR</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sets the basis for strategy making. • Oversees the formal system of resource allocation. • Establishes the work system of the organization. • Authorizes all significant allocations before implementation.
		<u>NEGOTIATOR</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leads negotiations with other entities. • Authority to commit organization’s resources.

Figure 1-The Operating Infrastructure



This model represents the manager's **information flow network based on management system functions**. It ties the organization's activities and staff performance to goals and objectives. Evaluation of the nature and implementation of the functions shown in the blocks reveals management prudence, diligence, and motivation.

TABLE 3-SELF AWARENESS, JOB AWARENESS, ORGANIZATIONAL AWARENESS INTEGRATION

CHARACTERISTICS	TYPE OF ORGANIZATION				
	<i>Implicit</i>	<i>Prospector</i>	<i>Analyzer</i>	<i>Defender</i>	<i>Reactor</i>
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Narrow Scope Network of Contacts Experience and Expertise Name Recognition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Innovation Creates need ID Threats Gap Strategy: A to B Market Definer External Drivers Risk Tolerant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Imitation Strategic Focus Adapt Proven Tech. Risk Averse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Narrow Scope Stability and Efficiency Dogma, Policy and Procedure Entrenched Practices 	Wishful Thinking
TECHNICAL APPROACH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Problem Statement and Solution Applied Technology Smarter and how to get it done 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technology Application Evolve and Grow Services Big Picture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate Imitation Applied Research Develop Efficiency in product and services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assign a Champion (to make a problem go away) Efficiency First Risk Averse Control Change 	Outdated
MANAGEMENT TEAM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informal Ad Hoc Evolving Diverse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decentralized Change Control Teaming Talent in Staff Client Oriented Horizontal Integration across business areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed Planning in Marketing and Production Vertical Structure for Stability Integrates Subsidiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Top Down (kiss up, kick down cliché) Central Planning Overly Critical (problem finding) Training Facilitated Deference to Specialists Line Authority and Control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lacking In: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Problem ID -Markets -Technology -Strategy -Goals -Change Control Cannot meet basic purpose
DECISION TEAM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals in spotlight Vertical Alliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Product and Service Driven Rainmakers Business and Market Leaders Unique Staff Talent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Production and Marketing Applied Research Driven by Area of Imitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stable, Long Term Top Managers Financial Managers Main Product and Service Managers 	All talk no action: "where we have been, where we are, and where we are going" makes them feel good and gives them an appearance of wisdom.
TEMPERAMENT SELF AWARENESS (Communication blog posts)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intuition Thinking Perceiving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intuition Thinking Perceiving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feeling Intuition Judging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thinking Sensing Judging 	If you don't know where you are going, any temperament will get you there.
DOMINANT MANAGERIAL ROLES (Nature of managerial work)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategist Problem Solver Liaison 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor Strategist Problem Solver Resource Allocator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor Disseminator Problem Solver Spokesman 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Figurehead Leader Liaison Spokesman 	None dominant as they are mostly non-existent.

**TABLE 4-SELF AWARENESS, JOB AWARENESS, ORGANIZATIONAL AWARENESS INTEGRATION
WORKSHEET**

CHARACTERISTICS	TYPE OF ORGANIZATION				
	<i>Implicit</i>	<i>Prospector</i>	<i>Analyzer</i>	<i>Defender</i>	<i>Reactor</i>
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Narrow Scope Network of Contacts Experience and Expertise Name Recognition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Innovation Creates need ID Threats Gap Strategy: A to B Market Definer External Drivers Risk Tolerant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Imitation Strategic Focus Adapt Proven Tech. Risk Averse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Narrow Scope Stability and Efficiency Dogma, Policy and Procedure Entrenched Practices 	Wishful Thinking
TECHNICAL APPROACH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Problem Statement and Solution Applied Technology Smarter and how to get it done 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technology Application Evolve and Grow Services Big Picture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate Imitation Applied Research Develop Efficiency in product and services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assign a Champion (to make a problem go away) Efficiency First Risk Averse Control Change 	Outdated
MANAGEMENT TEAM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informal Ad Hoc Evolving Diverse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decentralized Change Control Teaming Talent in Staff Client Oriented Horizontal Integration across business areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed Planning in Marketing and Production Vertical Structure for Stability Integrates Subsidiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Top Down (kiss up, kick down cliché) Central Planning Overly Critical (problem finding) Training Facilitated Deference to Specialists Line Authority and Control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lacking In: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Problem ID -Markets -Technology -Strategy -Goals -Change Control Cannot meet basic purpose
DECISION TEAM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals in spotlight Vertical Alliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Product and Service Driven Rainmakers Business and Market Leaders Unique Staff Talent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Production and Marketing Applied Research Driven by Area of Imitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stable, Long Term Top Managers Financial Managers Main Product and Service Managers 	All talk no action: "where we have been, where we are, and where we are going" makes them feel good and gives them an appearance of wisdom.
TEMPERAMENT SELF AWARENESS					
DOMINANT MANAGERIAL ROLES					

Table 4 is a worksheet that can be used to include one's personal experience and expertise in the matters of integrating the self-awareness function and the managerial roles in their workplace.

A Final Thought or Two

Some time ago, in management training courses I completed, the conventional wisdom was that managers practice certain functions, i.e.: planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting, budgeting, leading, and controlling. The first question I came away with was: "If managers practice planning (for example) what do planners do?" One would think that planners plan and managers manage. Similarly, regarding controlling for example: "If supervisors control, what are managers doing?" The answer to these questions is that managers lead and they lead by providing the direction for the organization because there is no one else that does this function in the organization.

Overall, managers are typically responsible for the functions listed above, but most of those items are performed by someone else. These are management tasks but not the basic functional aspects of the manager's job.

Figure 1-The Operating Infrastructure shows the functional areas that managers must design and implement in their organization to make it work. This must be done on the micro (task) and macro (organizational) levels. Managers must also ensure all needed resources are provided and all roadblocks removed so that their talented staff can succeed in performance of their assigned tasks and duties thus accomplishing the mission of the organization. **That is what managers do.**