The Interdisciplinary Workplace

The Organization as a Society

Traditional Societies
- Social roles prescribed
- Good & evil are distinct
- Truth is not debatable
- Individual choices restricted to social prescriptions

Traditional Organizations
- Roles strictly defined
  - Specific functions and jurisdictions of influence
- Rational thinking and decision making
- Hierarchical relationships
  - Impersonal
  - Based on established rules

The Organization as a Society

Collectivist Societies
- Identity = group identifications
- Goals of one’s group more important than own goals
- Admired
  - “Team player”
  - Not attracting attention from others

“Collectivist” Organizations
- Group membership
  - Department
  - Work team
- Work towards organizational goals
- Team-oriented thinking rewarded
  - Team received credit for accomplishments
The Organization as a Society

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Support</th>
<th>Organizational Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supports creativity</td>
<td>Supports creativity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– That furthers society’s goals</td>
<td>– When creativity is goal of organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hinders creativity</td>
<td>Hinders creativity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– That threatens power structure</td>
<td>– When new ideas and products threaten power structure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Traditional Organizational Structure

- Reduce uncertainty
  - Replace it with routine
  - Maximize predictability and order
- Roles
  - Strictly defined
    - Specific functions and jurisdictions
- Ensure accountability
- Use control to increase productivity

Traditional Organizational Structure

- Work well in stable economic environments
  - Homogenous workforce and consumer base
- Current economic environment is unstable
  - Changes are global
  - Heterogeneous workforce and consumer base
Hierarchical Organization

- Depends on specialization
  - Encourages conservative thinking
- Unfamiliarity with subordinate’s specialization
  - Rejection of subordinate’s unfamiliar/creative ideas
- Hinders rapid task switching
  - Constant learning curve
  - No time for creativity

Traditional Organizational Structure
(Kimbell, 1999)

- Quickly becoming a nation of stressed-out wage slaves
  - Jobs require them to work longer
    - 88% of workers
  - Jobs require them to work faster
    - 68% of workers
  - Jobs are meaningless
    - 80% of workers
- Solution = more jobs?
- Solution = more meaningful jobs?

(Very) Traditional Work

- Occurred at or near the home
  - Surrounded by family, community, nature
- Was integrated with life
  - Not 8 hrs of work in the middle of day
- No specific term for work
  - “Job” = criminal or demeaning act
  - “Career” = “racing course”, “rapid and unrestrained activity”
  - “Vocation” = “answering a calling”
    - Leads to a “profession” (“public declaration of what we believe and who we are”)
Cult of Efficiency

• Cult of efficiency
  – Work faster, waste less time, produce more
    • Causes stress and mental disorders (anxiety, depression)
  – Solution
    • Work ethic emphasizing empathy for physical and mental needs of workers

Dictatorship of the Workplace

• “Every workplace is a dictatorship”
  – Passive subjects in managerial tyrannies
• Misplaced values
  – Focus is on wages
  – Focus should be on sense of purpose and accomplishment
    • Increase role in decision-making
• Forced to move where the job is
  – Destroy sense of community and family

Re-envisioning the Workplace

• Advise students to seek vocations rather than jobs
• Empathy for physical and mental needs
  – More paid vacation and family health care
  – Flexibility in choosing part-time work
  – Higher minimum wage
  – Medical benefits
Re-envisioning the Workplace:
Creativity

- Less emphasis on rules, regulations…
  - Less specialization
  - Don’t punish violations of hierarchy
- Reward behavior resulting in creative products
  - Let people take risks and fail
- Hire slow learners of the organizational code
Hire Slow Learners of the Organizational Code (Sutton)

- Shared norms
- Hiring decisions
  - Based on similarity to employees
- Innovative organizations
  - Needs “weird” employees
  - “Avoid ignore, or reject “the heat of the herd””

Characteristics of “Slow Learners”

- Low self-monitors
- Avoid contact with co-workers
- Have high self-esteem

Low Self-Monitoring

- Insensitive to cues about how to act
  - Controlled by inner attitudes, dispositions and values
    - Intrinsically motivated
- Not affected by social norms
  - Increase range of ideas in organization
Creative Personalities

- Non-typical problem solving processes
  - Divergent thinking
  - Remote association
  - Sensitivity to problems
- Non-typical personality traits
  - Openness to experience
  - Drive/ambition
  - Independence
  - Need to be original
  - "Psychoticism"

Organizations Hiring “Creative” Personalities

- Assume creative organizations
  - Result from hiring creative people
- Assume creativity can’t be trained
  - Or only trained within certain limits

The “Creative Class”

- Shift to knowledge-based economy
- Productive, well-paid work
  - Based on ideas, information, adaptive thinking
  - Supported by the creative class
The “Creative Class”

• Social class
  – Paid to be creative

• Super-creative core
  – Scientists, engineers, artists

• Creative occupations
  – Creative professionals, managers

• 30% of workforce

The “Service Class”

• Low-end, low-wage, low-autonomy
  – Food service, janitors, secretaries...
  – Largest growing sector

• Supports the creative class
  – Take care of them
  – Do their chores
  • Allowing creative class to work long, unpredictable hours for high pay

• Illustrates discrepancies in what people do for their lives

Creative Class Values

• Individuality
  – Slow learners of organizational codes

• Meritocracy
  – Favor hard work, challenge and stimulation
  – Upward mobility based on skill and talent
  • Salary is only a marker of achievement (feedback)

• Diversity & Openness
  – Valued in all its manifestations
  • Sometimes out of self interest
Key to Economic Success

- Recruiting the creative class
  - Maintaining challenge
  - Stretching skill set
  - Work among interesting peers
- Create optimal conditions
  - Creative class attracted to organization

Assumptions of Organizational Approach to Creativity

- Creative individuals
  - Make a company creative
  - Are different from “normal” individuals
- Creativity can not be taught
  - Or only taught with limited results

Psychometric Approach to Creativity

- Origins in Intelligence test movement
  - Influenced by “Romanticism”
- Creative people differ from “normal” people
  - Possess traits normal individuals lack
  - Can be recruited but not “grown”
- Focus on historical creativity
Tests of Creative Thinking Capacity

- Test individual’s capacity to think creatively
- Assumptions
  - Generality of creative thinking skills
  - Difference between IQ and creativity
- Example
  - Divergent thinking test

Cognitive Components of Creative Processes

- Sensitivity to problems
  - See deficiency and think about how to resolve
  - Analyze situation
  - Determine what follows
- Components of creative thinking
  - Divergent thinking
  - Remote association

Divergent Thinking

- Divergent and convergent thinking during problem solving
  - Divergent
    - Generate many solutions
  - Convergent
    - Turn ideas into specific solutions
- Divergent = creative (?)
Remote Associations

- The ability to form connections between unrelated ideas
  - Go beyond task demands
- Remote Associates Task

TUG GRAVY SHOW: ____________

Creative Personalities

- Constellation of personality traits
- Identify traits of creative individuals
  - “Big Five” personality inventory

- High in Openness
  - Focus of creativity research
- Low in Extraversion
- Low in Friendliness
- Low in Stability
### Creative Personality in the Arts and Sciences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trait Category</th>
<th>Artists</th>
<th>Scientists</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nonsocial</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Openness to experience</td>
<td>Fantasy oriented</td>
<td>Openness to experience</td>
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<tr>
<td>Imagination</td>
<td></td>
<td>Flexibility of thought</td>
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<tr>
<td>Impulsivity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of conscientiousness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
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<tr>
<td>Affective Illness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emotional sensitivity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drive</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ambition</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Social</strong></td>
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<td>Autonomy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nonconformity</td>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>Introversion</td>
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<td>Independence</td>
<td>Dominance</td>
<td>Intolerance</td>
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<td>Hostility</td>
<td>Arrogance</td>
<td>Sedateness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aloofness</td>
<td>Hostility</td>
<td>Self confidence</td>
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<tr>
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### Characteristics of Interdisciplinarians

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<tr>
<td><strong>Traits</strong></td>
<td>Reliability (self motivated)</td>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>Lack of conscientiousness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>Initiative &amp; Assertiveness</td>
<td>Dominance</td>
<td>Independence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Patience</td>
<td>Tolerate ambiguity</td>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>Drives/Ambition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resilience</td>
<td>Risk taking</td>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>Impulsivity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sense of adventure</td>
<td>Thick skin</td>
<td>Open to experience</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>High Ego Strength</strong></td>
<td>Self secure</td>
<td>Self confidence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sensitivity to others</td>
<td>Preference for diversity/</td>
<td>Aloneness</td>
<td>Emotional sensitivity</td>
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<td>new social roles</td>
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<td>Norm doubting</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Broad Education</strong></td>
<td>Broad interests</td>
<td>Arrogance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Competence in one’s field</td>
<td>Ability to work in groups</td>
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