Organizations: System Needs

Organizations can be defined in many different ways. An organization is a collective of people working together to accomplish a goal. An organizational goal is a desired or intended end or results to be achieved by the organization, or as a desired state of affair, which the organization attempts to realize (Schriver 2004).

To understand what the needs of an organization are, the first thing is to understand the organization. There are three different types of organizations. The first type of organization is private-for-profit, which has a primary goal of making an economic profit. The second type is the governmental organization. This organization is comprised of the public sector and includes local, state, national, and international governmental agencies. The third type of organization is the private-not-for-profit, which provides civic and human resources that are funded by private citizens, fund-raising organizations, or privately funded foundations.

Another way of examining the needs of an organization is through traditional and alternative paradigms. Traditional perspectives on organizations are referred as “schools of thought.” They include classical approaches, human relations, systems, and contingency theory. These theories and concepts will help us to understand the organizational context within which we work, and through the people who seek services to improve their quality of life (Schriver, 2004). On the other hand, organizations within alternative paradigms extend information in order to gain more comprehensive and inclusive perspectives. Alternative perspectives are more “in process” than many traditional paradigms (Schriver, 2004).

Many organizations are tradition, alternative, and a combination of both requiring certain elements within the organization. However, there are certain needs that all organizations require to be successful. One of the most important needs of an organization is communication. Communication is transmitting ideas, and the sharing of information and perspectives that leads to understanding and cooperation (Stephens & Company, 2004).
There are three types of communication that an organization needs (Harvard Management Communication Letter, 2000). The three types are:

1. **Contractual trust** is, fundamentally, doing what you say you will do. You need to manage expectations, establish clear boundaries, delegate appropriately, honor your agreements, and above all, be consistent in your words and actions.

2. **Communication trust** is, at its heart, a question of honesty and disclosure. You have to be willing to share difficult truths with your employees, admit your mistakes, give honest feedback, and at the same time maintain confidentiality.

3. **Competence trust** is respecting your teammates' abilities and skills, as well as your own, and helping others learn new skills. It means involving others rather than trying to do it all yourself.

Two additional needs of an organization are accountability and adaptability. Accountability is an obligation or willingness to accept responsibility or to account for one's actions. Accountability is virtual teamwork that starts with a high emphasis on individual responsibility, rather than on group thinking. Adaptability means one is able to adapt and is suitable for an organization. Corporations today will succeed or fail depending on how well they can constantly take in data about their changing business landscape, and then communicate that understanding throughout their organizations (Harvard Management Communication Letter, 2000).

Organizations also need to have support from the environment, competent component parts, and rewards for achievement. In addition, they need to have the same mission or a shared vision for the future, a culture which unleashes people’s potential, an inspired, aligned senior management team, effective teams which accomplish results, and leaders at all levels (Moore, 2000). Other needs of an organization may include (Stephen & Company, 2004):

- **Organizational Direction** - Where are we going as an organization? Not in the sense of a mission statement, but as evidenced by our actions, solutions, and achievements.

- **Equality and Fairness** - The shared sense of individual and organizational justice in decision making that reveals our ethical values.
- **Recognition** - How do people know that we appreciate what they do? Do we both feel the same way?

- **Teamwork** - What are the examples within our organization, and how can this be enhanced?

- **Individual Roles** - Do we each feel that we have an individual role, and how can it be made more satisfying?

- **Guidance and Leadership** - How do we perceive our organizational leaders, both official and unofficial? How do their actions compare with the positive archetypes that we measure them against? How can we develop leaders that reach these ideals?

- **Security** - Do we foster an atmosphere of civility and decorum where we respect each other? Does our humor bring us recognition of our similarities, or is it based upon power over others?

- **Personal Growth Opportunities** - How can we achieve as individuals, while enhancing our contributions to the organization? How do we prepare for our future?

- **Physical Work Environment** - Are our physical work spaces and our tools suitable for what we are trying to achieve?

Although each organization has its own needs, many try to portray the World-Class Organization to the best of their ability. The World-Class Organization is “the best in its class or better than its competitors around the world” (Schriver, 2004). Some of the components of the World-Class Organization are: shared ownership of the customer service tasks and solutions, compensation systems designed to reward employees for excellent services, fluid and flexibility, constant training, egalitarianism, and technological support (Schriver, 2004).

Overall, Covey (1989) states that organization’s needs should be portray through four dimensions. These dimensions are: physical, mental or psychological, social/emotional, and spiritual. The physical dimension is expressed in economic terms. The mental or psychological dimension deals with the recognition, development, and use of talent. The social/emotional dimension has to do with human relations, and how people are treated. Finally, the spiritual dimension deals with finding meaning through purpose or contribution.
and through organizational integrity. Corey (1989) states that when an organization neglects any one or more of these areas, it negatively impacts the entire organization.

Organizations form the contexts in which much of our daily lives are carried out. They form the environment in which vast arrays of human behaviors take place. For many of us, virtually all aspects of our lives are intertwined with and influenced by organizations (Schriver, 2004).


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