Characteristics of a Healthy Organization

Schriver defines organizations as “social units (or human groupings) deliberately constructed and reconstructed to seek specific goals.”

Characteristics discussed in class and in Schriver of a healthy organization are:

- Positive Climate
- Motivation among workers
- Open Communication
- Competent Management, Effective Leadership
- All working toward a common goal
- Supportive environment, emotionally, psychologically, socially, and spiritually
- Cooperation among members
- All parts functioning effectively

Hodgetts et al. define a world-class organization as “the best in its class or better than its competitors around the world, at least in several strategically important areas.” These would be considered healthy organizations because they include the characteristics of both total quality organizations and learning organizations, these organizations have the following.

- A customer-based focus similar to a TQM organization but also include:
  - Shared vision for customer service
  - Shared ownership of the customer service tasks and solutions
  - Organizational structure, processes, and jobs designed to serve the customer
  - Empowered teams for generating new ideas and approaches to improve customer service
  - Information systems designed to monitor and predict the changing needs of the customer
  - Management systems that ensure prompt translation of the customers’ requirements to organizational actions
  - Compensation systems designed to reward employees for excellent service to customers
- Continuous improvement on a global scale
  - Emphasize global nature of learning
  - Utilize global networking, partnerships, alliances, and information sharing
- Fluid, flexible or “virtual” organization
  - Respond quickly, decisively, and wisely to changes in the environment
• Depend on outside partnerships and temporary alliances
• Develop a fluid, flexible, and multiple-skilled workforce
• Creative human resource management
  • Effectively energize employee’s creativity in decision making and problem solving
  • Constant training (“goof around and learn”)
  • Effective reward systems: positive recognition for success; recognition is open and publicized throughout the organization; recognition carefully tailored to the needs of the employee; rewards are given soon after they are earned; relationship between performance and reward is understood by everyone in the organization
• Egalitarian climate
  • Value and respect for everyone: employees, consumers, owners, suppliers, community, and environment
  • Shared vision/information
  • Holistic view of employees
  • Open Communication
  • Business ethics, community citizenship
  • Environment-friendly systems
  • Mentoring, coaching, buddy system
  • Employee involvement participation
  • Sponsor of community, wellness, and family programs
• Technological support
  • Computer-aided design (CAD) and manufacturing
  • Telecommunications networks
  • Database systems
  • Interorganizational communication systems
  • Multimedia systems
  • Continuous technical training

Each of these factors makes up a world-class organization, which would represent an incredibly healthy organization, which meets all of its members needs. However, organizations do not necessarily have to be comprised of each of these determinants to be considered healthy. An organization that is considered world class would be ideal. However, the few conditions given in class and Schriver also make up a healthy organization.