STS
INTERNATIONAL

WORK TEAMS THAT… WORK IN THE REAL WORLD

An STS Process for Developing High Performance Teams

STS INTERNATIONAL
2823 South Church Street
Burlington, NC 27215
336/584-7220

STS
INTERNATIONAL

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SYSTEMS THINKING

"The joy of this quest is not in triumph over others,
but in the search for the qualities we share with them
and for our uniqueness, which raises us above all competition."

Theordore Roszak

THEORY INPUT

For many centuries scientists believed that the best way to learn more about something they didn't understand was to take it apart and find out what it was made of. By separating and reducing a subject to it's smallest parts they were able to understand the characteristics of each individual element. This has worked well for discrete components and technology, but it failed in understanding the interrelatedness, interactions, and interdependencies which occur within operating living systems. To understand systems we have to let go of our current methods of viewing organizations and risk exploring new possibilities. We look at wholeness rather than parts, scan for patterns rather than single pathways, and see multiple means to a common end.

"***You cannot solve a problem from the***
same level of thinking you were at
when you created it."
Albert Einstein

UNDERSTANDING SYSTEMS

"A system is a collection of ***interdependent*** *parts which interact with each other to function as a whole. The cooling system in a car, for example, consists of a radiator, a fan, a water pump, a thermostat, a cooling jacket, and several hoses and clamps. Together they function to keep the engine from overheating, but separately they are useless. To do the job,* ***all*** *parts must be present and they must be arranged in the proper way."* *Adapted from Introduction to Systems Thinking, Future Systems, Inc.*

Using this example, the cooling system is a collection of parts combined together toward the purpose of keeping water cool. The cooling system is a sub-system of a larger system, the engine. If the cooling system achieves its purpose and the water is kept cool, then it supports the engine in achieving the production of energy to move the car. The car is a larger system of which the engine is a sub-system. And so it goes, whole systems within whole systems, interdependent and interlaced toward common, but distinctive purposes.

Organizational systems follow this same pattern. But they are much more complex than the cooling system, the engine, or the car. Organizational systems combine equipment, technology, and people in the accomplishment of common purposes. Systems thinking within the organization must recognize, understand, and build effective processes to guide relationships between whole individuals, working in whole teams, within whole units of whole businesses within larger social and economic systems of a global environment.

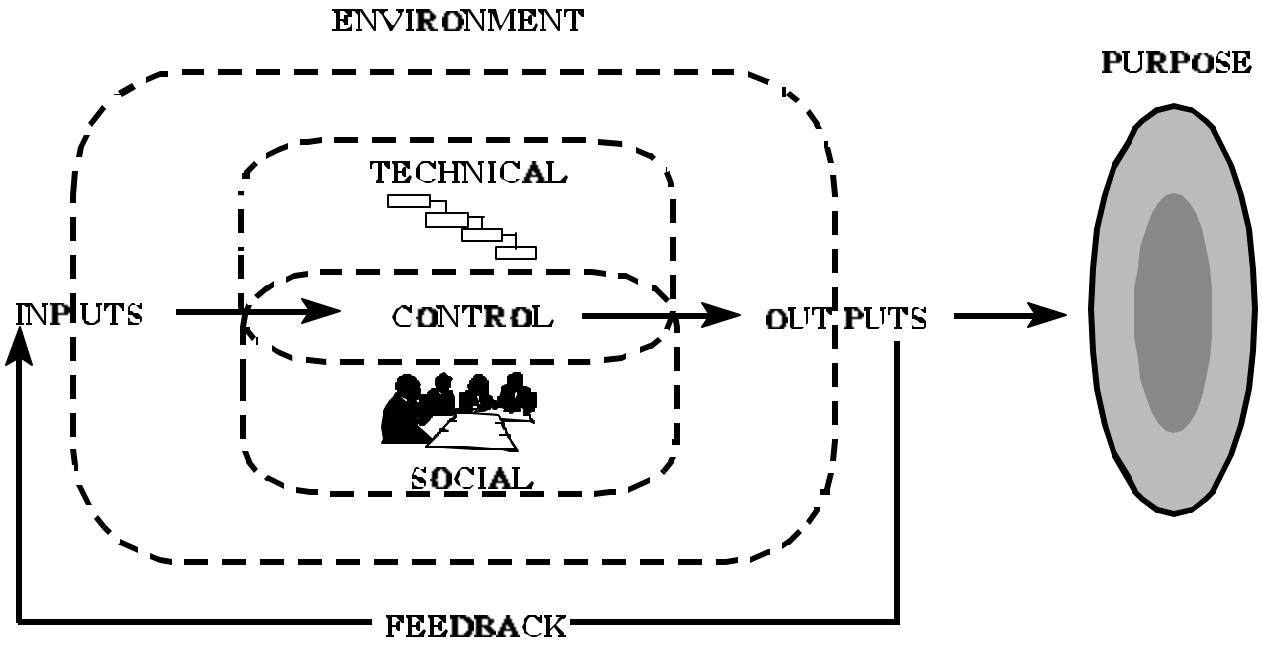
All systems utilize processes, agreed-upon methods for doing work in the organization. These processes regulate all aspects of organization life. Most of them were not consciously planned, nor are they openly clarified. They are both formal and informal, conscious and unconscious. They are exemplified by the "way we do business," the "chain of command," the "grape vine," the reverence for "sacred cows," the "organizational chart," policy manuals, etc. For success, it is vital that the systemic aspects of the organization be in agreement with the broader shared cultural and environmental demands. They interconnect with individuals and impact their sense of freedom, control, effectiveness, opportunity, empowerment, ownership, and so forth.

These processes are inseparably connected to each other. Just as in a whole individual, you can't separate the right brain creativity from the left brain logic—they need each other and they process the information for both content and feeling. You can't separate one process from another. You can study its elements, but you have to use other processes to make it effective.

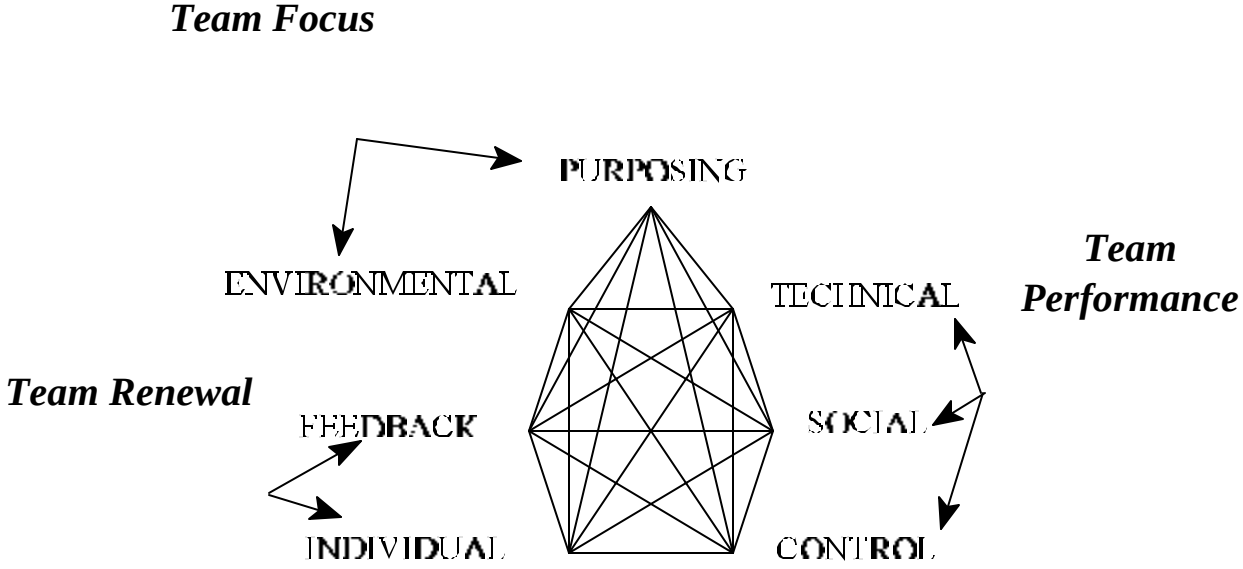
In creating an effective team or organization, there are seven systemic areas of process development which must be explored and understood. We refer to these as our Seven Core Processes, and they are key to the growth of a group from an "assemblage of people and parts" to an interdependent, efficient, and effective system. These processes are not "activities," but usually begin with an activity. They represent thought-out, agreed-upon methods for doing work and for continuously revisiting the achievement of that work. Processes help us achieve, they help generate the content of what needs to happen or get done to fulfill our system's purpose.

For example, creating a Mission or Vision statement for an organization is an activity. Once it is done, the statement is laminated, hung on the wall, and the team feels accomplished. If the team builds a Purposing process they get a mission and vision, but they also get a process to revisit the mission, set objectives which would demonstrate alignment with the mission and measures which account for accomplishment of the objectives. The "process" continually checks both the progress toward the mission and the continued "correctness" or viability of the mission over time.

The Seven Core Processes that effective teams need to develop, link the key elements of the STS Open Systems Model.



These Seven Core Processes have been grouped in the Team Development process into three key phases.



TRYING TO MAINTAIN FIT AND BALANCE BETWEEN THE THREE MAJOR AREAS

The importance of process is another discovery.
Goals and endpoints matter less.
Learning is more urgent than storing information.
Caring is better than keeping. Means are ends.
The journey is the destination.

Marilyn Fergusen

PHASE 1—TEAM FOCUS

A process for defining and setting direction while maintaining congruence with those we serve.

In this phase, we build specific **Environmental** and **Purposing** processes. This phase enables the team to discover why they exist, who they are accountable to, and what they are responsible for. It provides the team with common and real direction as they develop their identity. As we develop these processes we will be utilizing social, technical, and control processes within our team, individual needs will surface and impact felt, and we may provide feedback and respond to it. This will be very helpful to us as we explore these other processes in depth later.

PHASE 2—TEAM PERFORMANCE

A process for insuring successful product transformation through effective human interaction.

In this phase, we develop **Technical**, **Social Interaction,** and **Control** processes. We take the Variance Matrix and Variance Control Table and decide how we will work together to control product variances. We will decide how and when we meet, and how we will run effective meetings, how we interact in the principles of goal achievement, adaptability, integration, and long term development. These will be accomplished in support of the processes and information we gained during Team Focus and will continue to highlight individual needs and feedback processes (to be developed next).

PHASE 3—TEAM RENEWAL

A feedback process for individual, team, and system congruence.

In this phase, **Feedback Processes** and **Individual Needs** processes will be explored. We have worked as a team for some time, struggled to perform and to mature, and now we can assess our progress and each other, and renew our team to the next level of performance.

It is important to recognize that when we work on developing each phase, the remaining 4 or 5 core processes will not go untouched. They are all interdependent and interactive parts. Only the focus and emphasis changes as we move from phase to phase.

TEAM OUTPUTS

- An understanding of systems thinking and how it is different from current organizational thinking.
- A series of questions that would enable you to develop each core process.
- An understanding of how the seven core processes interact with each other.
- A listing of how and why the seven core processes are critical to systems thinking.

DESIRED TEAM PROCESS

- Review the three team exercises found at the end of this section and select the one(s) your team feels is best for them.
- A listing of the different processes and methods that could be utilized with your team to fulfill the team outputs.
- A means to share your team's unique learnings with the other teams.
- A process for revisiting, refining, or redesigning your team's core processes on a continual basis.

KEY LEARNINGS

When properly completed, the systems thinking overview should provide team members with the following key learnings:

- Everything is connected to everything else.
- It is the adaptable system, not the well adapted, that survive.
- Bad boundaries make for bad information flow.
- Changing one part of the system impacts the whole system.

STS
INTERNATIONAL

KEY PRINCIPLES & PARADIGMS

Understanding Organizations in New Ways

In exploring systems thinking and viewing organizations from a systemic perspective, there are some key principles to help us understand this concept.

NATURE KNOWS BEST

- Systems are governed by some natural laws.
- Think of organisms, rather than mechanisms.
- Organizations that live in harmony with their environment will thrive.
- Organizations, like plants and animals, are dependent on their external environment for their very survival.
- As a living thing, an organization exists only in the context of its larger environment.
- The environment isn't always right, but it's always there.
- It is the adaptable, not the well-adapted, who survive.
- Nothing grows forever.
- Successful systems must continue to transform or die.
- The only constant is change.
- Organizations are living systems—indivisible wholes made up of interdependent parts.

EVERYTHING IS CONNECTED TO SOMETHING ELSE

- A system functions as a whole—its behavior depends on its entire structure and not just on the sum of its parts.
- Any one part of a system has an effect on the whole system.
- Optimizing the performance of any one of its parts will result in sub-optimizing the performance of the whole organization.
- Each system or subsystem is made up of parts, and those parts, interacting, produce a whole, meaningful product or purpose.
- The pieces of a whole system act together as a single unit and is a subsystem or part of a larger system, and this larger system is a subsystem of a still larger system.
- To understand whole system you must use your whole brain, both your head (left brain) and your heart (right brain).

ORGANIZATIONAL SYSTEMS DEPEND ON PEOPLE

- Employees are the primary living component of the system. They create the adaptable system, make the connections, find the solutions, listen and respond to the feedback, and meet the competition.
- Employees must be allowed to see, touch, and be touched by the organization's external environment.
- Employees can think. They do have minds and can continue to learn how to use them better.
- Employees must be encouraged to grow, develop, and think. If you continue to give me a fish, I will never learn to fish.
- The best form of personal control is self control. It is also the best form of managerial control.
- Establishing effective, principle-based boundaries within the system provides the opportunity for effective self-control.
- Bad boundaries and rules make for poor performance and ineffective communications.
- Empowerment is not just to share decision-making with employees. You must create a shared vision, design specific expectations, measure output, and share consequences, both positive (rewards) and negative (failures).
- If you're not willing to truly empower employees, you may do more harm than good.
- Empowerment can't exist when we continue to separate the managing and the doing of the work.

EVERY SYSTEM HAS INPUT/OUTPUT AND A FEEDBACK LOOP

- Feedback is the heart of renewal.
- Feedback provides system stability.
- To ignore the feedback is to be blind and vulnerable to needed changes. A vulnerable, blind, non-responsive system will die.
- Integrating and welcoming feedback into the system increases your environmental and customer awareness, closes the blind spots, and allows you to grow and adapt.
- Systems act to negate changes and are often called "negative feedback" loops and are used loosely as synonyms for "criticism"….In systems theory, "negative" feedback isn't entirely good or bad. It's the process which negates changes or balances the system.
- Every system takes its inputs from the environment and gives back to the environment a product or service that is needed. The feedback loop between output and input lets us know how well the need is being fulfilled.

THE SYSTEMS THINKING PARADIGM

Systems thinking guides us to view organizations from broader perspectives than before. In systems terms, our *approach*:

IS NOT	IS
! problem driven	! purpose/product driven
! canned or recipe solutions	! collaborative centered
! an overlay/add on	! whole system design
! business as usual	! new way of doing business

Just recognizing we can and should use systems thinking will not solve our pressing issues. We must apply these ideas in new ways by shifting our models, beliefs, and methods of designing organizations. Creation of high performance work systems requires a paradigm shift in the way we look at structuring, developing, and managing organizations for growth, profit, and survival. In essence, several "shifts" need to occur to create high performance through systems thinking. These "shifts" are detailed on the next page.

THE "SHIFTS"

OLD PARADIGM	NEW PARADIGM	WHERE IT IMPACTS IN THE ORGANIZATION
Maximum task breakdown; simple, narrow skills	Optimum tasks grouping; multiple skills; breadth & depth of skills	Structure: ! Division of labor
External controls (supervisors, specialists, staffs, procedures)	Internal controls (self-regulating, integrating sub-systems)	! Responsibilities ! Authority
Tall organizational chart, autocratic style	Flat organizational chart, participative style	
The technology imperative	Joint optimization	Work Design
People as an extension of the Machine	People as complimentary to the Machine	! Philosophy
People as an expendable spare part	People as a resource to be developed	! Information
Competition	Collaboration	
Gamesmanship	Collegiality	! Knowledge
Organization's Purpose Only	Member's and Society's Purpose Also	! Rewards
Alienation	Commitment	
Low risk-taking	Innovation	! Selection/ Retention

TEAM EXERCISES

OVERVIEW FOR EXERCISE 1

You have been assigned to form and develop a team to explore a new business opportunity or create a new product. The driving force is "time to market" since your competition is actively pursuing a similar opportunity which could impact or remove your window of opportunity. The best projection is that a detailed recommendation is needed in 10 months with a prototype ready for testing in 15 months.

OVERVIEW FOR EXERCISE 2

Your company has just announced a significant redesign and you have been asked to facilitate the development of two newly formed teams of long time employees. No one from either team has been directly involved in the redesign, and they have had limited communication on why it has been done or how it is supposed to work.

OVERVIEW FOR EXERCISE 3

You are a team coach in a new company start-up which has been organized as a "Greenfield" socio-technical design. Team members are currently being hired from the outside and some have been transferred from existing "sister" company locations. The start-up curve is very aggressive with initial production planned within 3 months ramping up to full design capacity 6 months later.

THE TASK FOR ALL THREE EXERCISES

With your team, develop a list of questions you must explore with the team in order for the team to be efficient and effective in each of the seven core process areas.

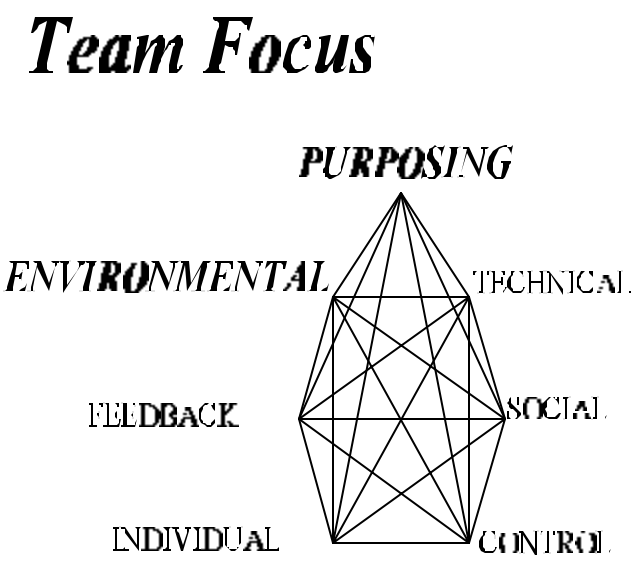
Process the list of questions into three categories—questions which must be answered in:

- the next 2 months
- in the next 6 months
- after 6 months

STS
INTERNATIONAL

TEAM FOCUS

A PROCESS FOR UNDERSTANDING FIT AND SETTING DIRECTION



The first step in developing high performance work teams is work team formation. Even though the development of all seven core processes is necessary for the team to be fully formed and functioning, the two primary processes which differentiate this stage are Environmental and Purposing processes.

Leaders of high performance teams assist the team to focus itself through the meaningful development of these two direction-setting processes.

THEORY INPUT

All living things or systems are dependent on something else for their survival and growth. Think for a moment about an acorn falling from the oak tree. For it to survive, it must depend on lots of external help. For example, soil, temperature, sunlight, moisture, etc. If any of these elements is missing or deficient, then the acorn will never survive and grow. It cannot survive long depending only upon its own internal capabilities or resources.

Organizations, teams, and individuals are like that acorn. We all are interdependent with the larger environment for survival and growth. None of us can survive depending only on our own internal capabilities and satisfying just our needs. That's what understanding the ***environmental*** **system is all about; finding out how we fit in.**

Organizations and teams that have processes helping them stay in touch with their external environment will survive and thrive over the long haul. These processes allow for adaptability and flexibility within your system. Through an understanding of how your organization and team fit into the larger environment, competitive advantage can be gained. By looking at our organization and team as a whole system, we appreciate how internal partners build upon one another's work in an open exchange; how each can take in outside requirements and life-sustaining support and give back products and services that perpetuate the economic value chain for mutual survival and growth.

Back to the acorn. Hidden deep in its genetic coding is its purpose. If it can find the right environment and stay in harmony with that environment, then it can fulfill its purpose…to become a giant oak tree.

Individuals, teams, and organizations are not genetically coded with a purpose…each must discover its own. That's what this core process is all about, purpose, or finding our ***target***.

Purpose includes the business mission of the team, its philosophy of human values, and its willingness to satisfy customer/stakeholder requirements. These requirements come directly from our external environment.

Business teams are first and foremost value adding or transforming entities. A team has to identify the direction in which it is heading as it changes from where it is today to where it will be tomorrow. A business team also acts in an economic environment that produces and needs profit to fund its long term growth.

Developing meaningful environmental and purposing processes by a business team will provide its members with a sense of identity, direction, and common focus. Purpose is the glue of team interdependency, the common target at which all can aim.

PRIMARY TASK

You and your high performance team need to know, understand, and integrate the following:

- What's going on in the environment they are interdependent with for survival.
- Who do they account to and how.
- How the team fits into the larger system.

- What our purpose is.
- What you are trying to achieve.
- What needs to be accomplished.
- How team members behave as a team.

You need to personally develop the leadership skills and competencies necessary to assist the team to create this understanding.

GETTING STARTED

- Make sure everyone has read the material in this section.
- Establish and agree on the objectives for your team in this section.
- Use the resource material provided to enable the team to get started. Do not rely on this material as the answer…it is only a guide.

TEAM OUTPUTS
ENVIRONMENTAL PROCESS

As a team, it is critical to identify, discuss, understand, and build a strategy for dealing with the external environment. In order to accomplish the requirements of the environmental core process, each of the following tasks must be completed:

- Understanding and agreement of how our team/sub-system fits into the larger organizational system. Who do we serve in both the external environment and internal environments?
- What are the major trends that will impact our team's ability to serve the external and internal environment?
- Understand clearly who are our team's stakeholders and what are their specific demands and expectations.
- Boundary identification and agreement. Both for "input" (when and from whom we take responsibility for resources) and "output" (when and to whom we deliver our outputs and what are the outputs).
- A method for dealing with conflicting stakeholder demands.

- Measures and measurement system to provide on-going feedback on team performance in relationship to stakeholder demands and expectations.

- A process for influencing and providing feedback to the environment from our team to continually stay in touch with the world outside our team.

TEAM OUTPUTS
PURPOSING PROCESS

As a team, discuss and develop a strategy to deal with and accomplish the following tasks:

- Understanding and agreement on a team purpose statement that describes stakeholder fulfillment in terms of how we will satisfy the external/internal market and environment requirements. The statement would include:

  - Business expectation that indicates why we exist in terms of the team's shared goals. **MISSION**

  - Value and belief expectations of how we will enable and develop team members. **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

  - What we feel we could become. **VISION**

- Development and agreement of a team name and logo that expresses member desires and our uniqueness and ties or relates to our mission.

- Four to six guiding principles that, combined with the mission statement, will guide us in our team's interactions and decision making.

- Review and agreement of the team's key output requirement to formulate measurable goals and objectives that relate to our unique products and services and assure overall purpose fulfillment.

A PROCESS PLAN

- A listing of the different methods or activities that could be utilized with your team to build environmental and purposing processes that are living, not simply a one time event.

- Develop a plan to use one of these methods or activities with your team back home in order to build or re-visit its processes.

- Discussion and understanding of how these two processes and team formation "fit" with the other core processes.

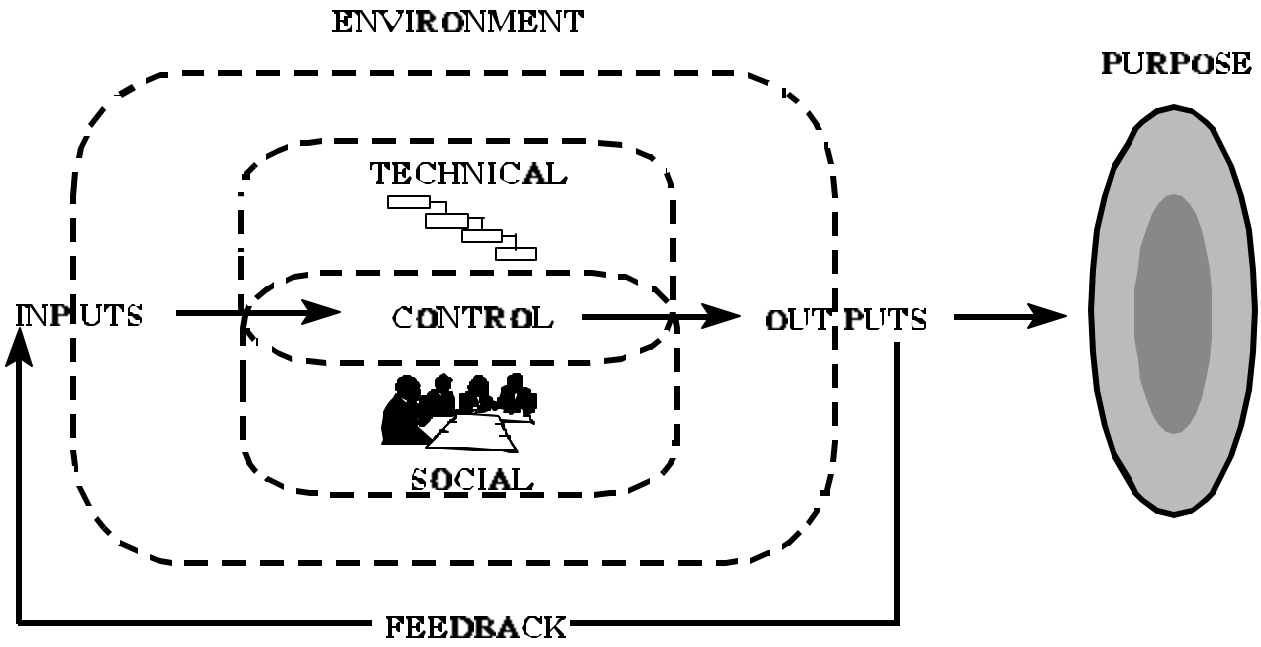
- A means to share your unique learnings with the other workshop teams. Up to fifteen minutes will be provided each team for this task at the beginning of the next general session.

KEY LEARNINGS

When properly completed, team focus should provide team members with the following key learnings:

- Environments change, so teams must discover ways to stay in touch with the environment.
- We don't get to choose our stakeholders; we just have to fulfill their requirements.
- Stakeholder demands can be conflicting.
- Teams not in harmony with the environment will fail to know, adapt to, and fulfill stakeholder requirements.
- Purpose builds common vision and understanding.
- Without purpose there is little meaning to what we do.
- Purpose guides and directs the team.
- Building the purpose is what develops ownership and commitment to it.
- Purpose is a living document, not a static event.
- Purpose provides the team a "touch stone" for making both short and long term decisions.

EXPLORING HOW THE TEAM FITS INTO THE LARGER SYSTEM



Describe and show how we fit in the organization, process, and environment:

ASSESSING STAKEHOLDER DEMANDS AND CURRENT RESULTS

Major Stakeholders & Customers	What they demand/need from our team?	How are we currently doing in meeting these needs?	What must we do now to meet/understand the needs?

ASSESSING OUR PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACCOUNTABILITIES IN SATISFYING OUR ENVIRONMENT

Key results we are responsible for:	To whom do we account?	How do we account?

DEFINING KEY OBJECTIVES AND MEASURES

Long term—Specific Objectives	Short term goals to support the objectives	Specific measures and reporting methods

ACTION PLANNING—ORGANIZING OUR TEAM TO CONTINUALLY MEASURE AND PROVIDE FEEDBACK TO OUR ENVIRONMENT

Actions required? responsible for:	Who will coordinate?	When will it be completed?

Summary of key stakeholder needs:	How those needs can be satisfied?

Team Mission—WHY WE EXIST?

Team Guiding Principles—Value and belief expectations of how we will enable and develop team members.

Team Vision—Looking ahead to what we could become.

Team Name and Logo—Identifying who we are and how we're unique

ENVIRONMENTAL SYSTEMS

The Team in Harmony with its Environment Will Thrive

No team is an island, complete unto itself. Like any other living thing, the team exists only in the context of its larger environment. All of the team's needs are drawn from this environment; all of its products are returned to the environment. To recognize this is to see the transparency of all rigid distinctions between "us" and "them."

The boundary that separates inside from outside is permeable and open. It is a door, more than a wall; a bond, more than a barrier; a concept, more than a firm reality. Across the invisible boundary that divides them, transactions between the team and its environment are governed by a set of natural laws.

You don't have to be a rocket scientist to understand these laws. Think of biospheres, ecology, bees, and flowers. Think of organisms, rather than mechanisms. The team and its environment are living entities, united in time and space. They are inseparable, interdependent, and mutually-creating. Like two sides of the same coin, each is required for the other's existence.

The team exists by the "consent" of its environment. The environment, in turn, is defined and changed by the action of the teams in it.

Purpose is the central value that unites inside with outside. The right purpose, rightly understood, radiates vitality in both directions. The team's central purpose, and the way that purpose is pursued, must be wanted and supported by its environment.

In the pursuit of its purpose, or "core mission," the team may identify any number of particular objectives. Many, if not all, of these will be imposed by the environment. And all of these objectives must be defined, integrated, and acted upon in ways that are both internally congruent and externally compatible with the environment's own many demands and needs. In short, the team that lives in harmony with its environment will thrive; the team that is unresponsive will wither and die.

All of this is so obvious it hardly bears repeating. It's a given. A set of basic assumptions to be taken for granted. In times of relative stability, there is no pressing need to elaborate on the required "fitness" between the team and its environment. Not much is happening out there. So the team's adaptive response capability goes untested.

In times of chaos and turbulence, however, the team's very survival depends on its ability to respond quickly and well to the new environmental demands. These are such times. Consider the massive changes reshaping the face of the whole world today, and the increasing speed, complexity, and unpredictability of all these "megatrends." Consider the impact of this tidal wave on the particular environments most relevant to your own team and on the technological, economic, social, geographic, and other fields in which you operate. Consider, too, how vastly different are the expectations and demands of your many stakeholders now, compared with those of times past.

Customers, suppliers, lenders, owners, workers, and every other direct participant in the enterprise has shaped and been shaped by those same still-rising rivers of change. Teams that choose to ignore these developments do so at their own risk. The pressures mount. The questions persist. Where are these new trends taking us? What kind of teams must be designed to master these turbulent times? These are the questions that must be asked and answered by every kind of team today—questions of adaptation and survival, transformation or decay. These are big questions, even ultimate questions. But they can be answered. Teams are human inventions, structured and managed for the conditions of the times. They can be re-invented for new times, even for times that demand continuous adaptation.

It's no easy task. All of the team's seemingly inseparable pieces must be taken apart, examined, and put back together again—re-fitted to a new pattern. The process begins with a careful look at the team-environment "set of the past, its features in the present, and the choices available for the future."

CREATING A PURPOSEFUL SYSTEM

The Team as an Agent of Transformation

What you see is what you get. That's more than just a funny punch line. For team designers, it's the statement of a simple fact.

The way people think about their team is directly related to the kind of team and the kind of results they'll produce. What you see ***determines*** **what you get. It works like a self-fulfilling prophecy. And it works both ways.**

Viewing a team from a systems viewpoint offers a dynamic alternative. It presents us with a map of the territory beyond the limits of machine age thinking, where people were seen mainly as cogs in the organizational wheel. In this view, the team is more than a collection of individuals, a specialized mini-society or an economic entity. It is, at heart, an "agent of transformation."

The system is understood as a living organism that draws the inputs it needs from the environment, transforming them into outputs that are needed by the environment. This view helps focus attention on the main work of the team, its function, rather than its particular form. And it puts function first. It recognizes that form, or team structure, should be fitted to the nature of the work and the environmental factors surrounding the work, rather than the other way around. This is quite different from the usual practice of buying a team structure off the rack, as it were, as if one size fits all.

The new model demands an ecological perspective. It puts the team in context with its environment, and with the transformation process required for its own survival. This transformation process occurs between the input and output "boundaries" that separate the system from its larger environment.

These boundaries are defined as the point at which ownership actually changes hands. This clarifies what exactly is within the system and what is beyond the system's sphere of direct influence and control. The delineation of clear boundaries, then, is the starting place for designing a system that fits and functions well, inside and out. Between the input/output boundaries, a technical system and social system must be designed to manage exchanges with the environment and to bring about the wanted transformation of inputs into outputs.

An effective design is fully three-dimensional. A well-structured team will find the proper balance between:

- The technical system's requirements for order and predictability.
- The needs of the workforce for meaning, variety, community, and self-expression.
- The environment's continuing demands for change of many kinds.

The ideal design will transcend the apparently opposing needs of these sub-systems, bringing them together as a unified whole. This is not so unthinkable as it may at first seem.

Charles Atlas might describe it as an exercise in "dynamic tension," rather than a contest to be won or lost. Pushing the system's "muscles" against each other can build up the entire body. But they're not "against" each other. They're pushing *together*.

This is why the central factor in team design is the system's primary purpose, or core mission. Common purpose unifies. It unites the people inside the system with each other, as colleagues in pursuit of the same larger vision. It can unite the inside system with the larger outside system too.

When the system's purpose is in harmony with the expectations of its stakeholders and with the demands of its larger environment, energy and resources are less likely to be lost in fruitless defensive maneuvers. The system's purpose must be as clearly understood and supported by the "outside" stakeholders as it is by those on the inside.

The system then is united around a central value, a core mission that is shared by all of the participants in the enterprise. But united ***action*** **is required as well. It's not enough to simply have in mind a common vision.**

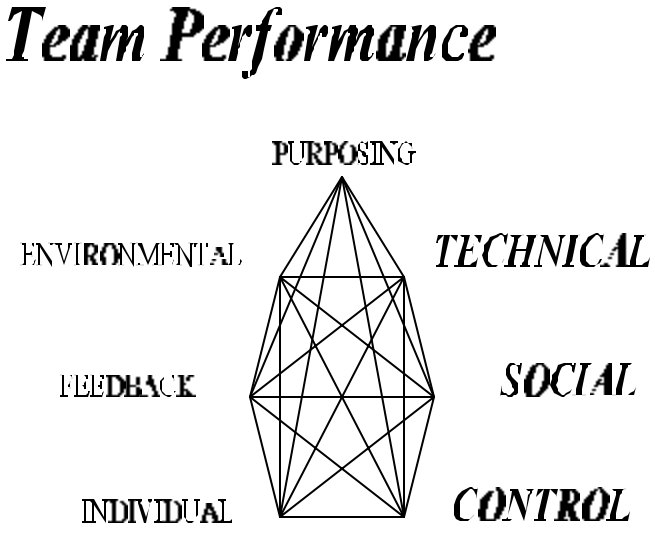
The system must also be designed to produce results. To create outputs that are clearly in line with the system's mission. And to do so in a way that is responsive to continuing changes in technology, economics, social pressures, and other environmental factors. It must, in other words, be fully integrated and adaptive. It's a tall order, but it can be done.

The process begins when the current system is put under the microscope for study. The team's technical, social, and environmental systems must be analyzed separately and then refitted to a new design. Early in the process, however, the system as a whole must be defined. This systems overview, or "scan," will serve as a primary point of reference for the team design work to come.

STS
INTERNATIONAL

TEAM PERFORMANCE

THE PROCESSES FOR INSURING SUCCESSFUL PRODUCT TRANSFORMATION AND EFFECTIVE HUMAN INTERACTION

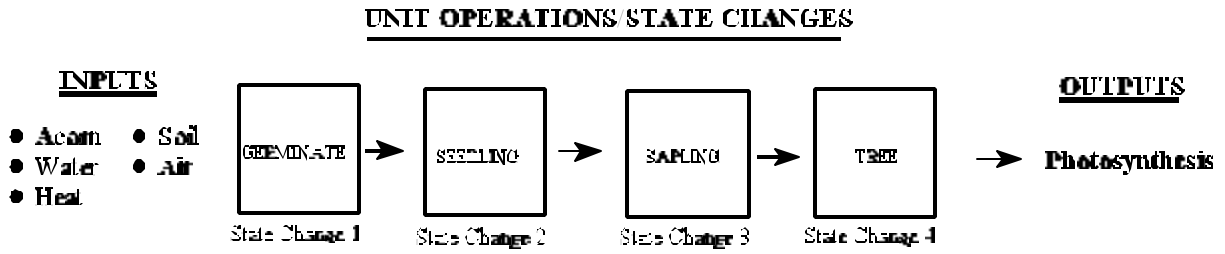


High performing teams "produce." That is, they effectively transform inputs into outputs by using well designed and clearly understood team processes. These core processes are identified as the "Technical," "Social," and "Control" processes.

For these processes to be "effective" teams have to do more than to develop them, more than "balancing" them, they have to continually improve and "optimize" all three of these processes.

THEORY INPUT
TECHNICAL PRODUCING PROCESSES

Technical system analysis is a way to understand the team's conversion process for taking inputs and producing outputs. Technical system understanding allows the team to manage its conversion process in terms of product/service state change, not tasks. For example, lets think about the conversion process for the acorn to become a tree.



The acorn (seed) along with the other inputs, water, sunshine, air, etc., combine and the seed changes state. It will literally burst open (germinate) with part of it pointing up and part of it pointing down. This germinated seed continues to change state as it interacts with the environment, absorbing water, heat, and nutrients. It develops a root pushing downward and a trunk pushing upward. It becomes a seedling.

The seedling continues to grow and change state. It develops leaves which start photosynthesis (converting sunshine, sap and carbon dioxide into sugar), develops a trunk, and when it attains a height of 6 feet, it is a sapling. As it continues to develop and attains reproductive capacity, it will again change state, becoming a tree.

High performance teams develop a joint understanding of their producing process from input to output. This understanding is in terms of what happens to the inputs as they become outputs, rather than what we do to those inputs. In our example, we understood what happened to the acorn, not what was done to it.

Technical systems understanding allows teams to manage and control their outcomes, instead of just doing assigned tasks. The team examines inputs (raw materials) and how those inputs become the final product, satisfying stakeholder requirements.

SOCIAL PROCESSES

Members of high performing teams clearly understand their technical producing process. More than that, they understand that each team member has a role and responsibility in the development, implementation, and coordination of that producing process. Effective development, implementation, and coordination results from the effective social interaction processes of this diverse group of individuals.

The social system defines patterns of human interaction and work relationships among team members. We need to understand the social system because it is these patterns of interaction that allow the team to control variances in its technical system. In addition, the social system design is vital for engaging people and sustaining their interest and commitment over the long haul.

The social system process is designed to help us achieve three key objectives:

- Regulate the organization's technical system.
- Support key variance control.
- Provide the framework to increase individual need attainment.

The social system enables individuals and teams to take control of their production rather than being controlled. The social system holds the key to the organization's long-run survival. It should be a fluid, creative endeavor focused on helping the team maintain alignment with the larger system.

In accomplishing the social process, your team will focus on four key elements forming the acronym **GAIL**:

Goal Attainment: Control of key variances through goal setting, performance, measurement, evaluation, technical problem solving, feedback, etc.

Adaptation: Reacting to and coping with immediate, short-term, environment-driven demands. These could include vendor problems, new regulatory issues, customer requirements, or other emergencies.

Integration: Creating wholeness and line of sight within the organization to reinforce interdependency and cooperation. Includes methods and processes to facilitate learning, teamness, involvement, respect, trust, etc.

Long Term Development: The actions needed to insure future success to include employee education/development, research, capital investment, etc.

CONTROL PROCESS

When we hear the word "control," often negative thoughts and feelings occur. Control has oftentimes materialized in negative, punitive ways in our lives. The state highway patrolman who controls speeding by writing tickets that result in fines; the IRS that audits our tax return and finds minor infractions that cause hours of work. Control for high performing teams is about assuring balance and accounting for results. Effective control processes keep the technical and social systems aligned with the external and internal stakeholders.

Control elements are those processes put in place to ensure that the team's purpose and objectives are met. For example, if we wanted to help our acorn transform into a tree, we would probably want to control temperature, moisture, nutrients, etc. In essence, help maintain balance within the producing process to attain purpose. In systems thinking, controls are viewed as essential, positive and supportive elements.

Organizations and teams focus their control process on variance control and values attainment. As a team/subsystem, we have established a mission/value statement and producing process in order to effectively meet the needs of our external and internal stakeholders by converting inputs into outputs.

Control of variances is best accomplished as close to the point of origin as possible. To the extent teams are enabled to control their variances as close to the source as possible, is the extent they will be able to move towards self-organizing behavior. The processes we choose to enable individuals and teams will determine how quickly they can mature and start living the value they developed.

PRIMARY TASK

Organizations and teams need to understand how inputs are converted into outputs, how variances are controlled or managed, and how individuals communicate and interact together to fulfill GAIL issues.

Utilizing the knowledge gained to identify:

- Your team's technical producing process.
- Your team's processes for controlling variances.
- Your team's organizational roles, responsibilities, and system to stay in touch with the greater environment while growing and developing the knowledge and skills required to survive and grow.

GETTING STARTED

- Make sure everyone has read the material in this section.
- Establish and agree on the objectives for your team in this section.
- Use the resource material provided to enable the team to get started. Do not rely on this material as the answer…it is only a guide.

TEAM OUTPUTS

As a team, discuss and develop a strategy to deal with and accomplish the following tasks:

- Define and verify your team's standards and its input and output characteristics and boundaries.
- Define the unit operation's major state changes within the input-output boundaries.
- Develop a variance matrix or utilize the one already developed.
- Use the variance matrix to identify key variances impacting success inside or outside your system. (Identify the "vital few" using a pareto analysis.)
- Prepare a team process for controlling the transformation process effectively.
- Prepare a listing of social and technical changes using **STS** principles to improve unit operations.
- Determine and assign the roles and activities needed to control the variance.
- Agree and secure the needed information and measurement systems to monitor variance control performance.
- Develop a means to control member behavior in order to attain team value/norm and standards.
- Development of an information/communication strategy to inform other people, teams, support groups, and managers of what is needed to assist your team in growing better in each core process.
- Development of team strategy to control the **GAIL** requirements within your team and with the external and internal stakeholders.

KEY LEARNINGS

When properly completed, this section should provide team members with the following key learnings.

- A new knowledge & language of the product or service.
- A new understanding and focus so all can contribute equally to the transformation process.
- How the process is designed for achievement of purpose significantly impacts product quality.
- Awareness of why and how team designed processes best use team members' distinct competencies.
- What the key variances are and how they will be controlled.
- With control also comes accountability.
- The degree of team autonomy correlates with the degree of internal self-control.
- System order cannot exist without control.
- Control is not an option; either the teams do it or someone else will.
- Finding the fit between environmental, technical, and social systems requires team maturity.
- Effective decisions are equal to quality thinking times acceptance.

Effective Decisions = Quality Thinking x Acceptance
Team growth doesn't just happen….
it must be planned.

TECHNICAL SYSTEMS ANALYSIS

Defining Work in Meaningful Terms

THERE IS A CHOICE

A cartoon shows two workers talking outside the factory gates. Caption: "What do we make here, anyway?" "Beats me, I've only had this job six months."

Here's another one: A stranger happens upon a construction site. Curious, he asks the first worker he meets, "What are you doing here?"

"I'm laying bricks," he says.

The stranger asks the next man, "What are you doing here?"

"I'm building a wall."

Finally, a third workman is asked the same question, "What are you doing here?"

"We're raising a cathedral," says the last man proudly.

Four out of five workers in these stories do not know the *product*, much less the real purpose of their work. Their jobs have been reduced to disconnected fragments, abstract and meaningless. They've been mechanized. Who knows how many others are in the same fix, resigned to their fate, convinced that there's little, if any, choice in the world of work today. But there is a choice.

The alternative to disjointed jobs and alienated workers is a work system that is designed to reunite the people with their purpose. One of the goals of your team design is to do just that; to restore what was once a direct and meaningful relationship between working people and the work they do.

This is what is meant by seeking the optimum fit between "the social system" and "the technical system." In contrast to the purely mechanical approach, joint optimization delivers several real advantages. It recognizes and employs the human potential for creativity, learning, and self-discipline. It leads to greater commitment, motivation, and work life satisfaction. And, for the

team as a whole, it improves internal regulation while also boosting the system's flexibility, quality, and productivity.

Before such a system can be designed, it is necessary to have a proper conception of the work. It is all too easy to return to the familiar but outworn ideas of the past: to think of work in terms of the collection of tasks required, or of the tools used, or of the traditional hierarchies, departments, specialties, and other old-model "boxes" into which people have been force-fitted for so long.

In the new model, all of that is put aside. The system must be understood, first and foremost, as an agent of transformation. It exists to transform inputs from the environment into outputs wanted by the environment. Within the system's boundaries, those inputs are changed from what they were coming into the system into the final product the system exists to produce.

It is important to understand how that input changes from one state to another as it passes through the transformation process. Borrowing a concept from chemical engineering, significant state changes are called "unit operations." Technical system analysis also requires the identification of all the critical variables that must be controlled in the process. These are called, simply, "variances."

UNIT OPERATIONS

Unit operations represent major steps in the transformation process. The input is changed to *this* and then *this* is changed to *that*, and so on, until the final "thing" is the product itself. The idea here is to focus on the input as it is transformed, rather than on the particular process, tools or techniques being used to help bring the transformation about.

To define the transformation process in terms of its state changes, or unit operations, does three things. First, it helps the people in the system to understand the process in the simplest and clearest possible way. People are often amazed to discover that there are fewer unit operations than they might have thought. They can see, too, how every one of these successive state changes is in fact the product-in-becoming. Also, they begin to see their own roles as masters over this change process, rather than as robotic units whose actions are programmed and controlled by some larger machine.

The second big advantage in defining the process by its unit operations has already been suggested. It liberates the mind. Team members are freed from the illusion that current technology is all there is. The transformation requires these state changes, not necessarily these particular tools, procedures, and organizational arrangements.

This kind of thinking fires the imagination. Everyone in the team system can start looking for better ways to bring the product into being, rather than just better ways to work the old machinery.

For creativity to arise and be put to good use, it must be unbound from the limitations of the existing machinery—be it in the machinery of the technical or the organizational sort. In a nutshell, the system defined by its unit operations is more likely to generate and to accept good ideas, from within and without.

Finally, unit operations each represent an identifiable, whole and vital contribution to the end product. Because of that, unit operations may also serve as the most appropriate bases for defining internal team work-unit boundaries. Instead of organizing teams and designing jobs around a particular kind of tool, for example, employees could be assigned to teams that are put together to manage one or more unit operations. People who are assigned work in this way find it much easier to identify with the product, with the organization's central purpose, and with their fellow employees as partners in the same essential work. Everyone involved knows why they're here, what they're here to do, and which problems are clearly their own to manage. This kind of organization builds both teamwork and responsibility.

The need for costly layers of supervision, communication, inspection, and checking jobs goes way down when the system is designed for direct control of the system's *real* requirements.

What are those requirements? "Variances." In technical analysis, according to the principles of advanced system design, variances do not include "problems," like breakdowns in the technical process or in the machinery. They do not include human error either, nor any of the other operational problems associated with work systems of every kind.

VARIANCES

Variances are seen as simply those normal deviations that occur as the input passes through the transformation process. These might be variances in the state of the input itself, or variances in the normal state of the technical procedures or techniques. A list of variances, then, is no more than a list of all the things that tend to "wobble" around some central tendency or norm.

You don't have to worry yet how these variances will be controlled, or who will do the controlling. In this phase of your technical system analysis, it's enough to just make a list of all the variances. When you've got them all down, in order, and within the unit operation where they occur, you're ready to identify *key* variances.

These are the big ones, the variances that *must* be carefully controlled for the system to get the job done right. Key variances are those that directly or indirectly have the largest impact on the quantity, quality, or cost of the system's product. Failure to control these key variances can cause big problems, and they can make other problems much worse. If they can be automated out of existence, that's great. But not all of them can be eliminated.

No automated or computerized system yet designed is so self-regulating that it can run error-free forever, without human adjustment, modification, and control. It's still up to people to control those variances, and to keep inventing better and better ways to control them.

Which people? To the greatest possible extent, control should be in the hands of the people closest to the source of the variance. Let them "nip it in the bud," at the source. Keep the social system simple, supple, and strong. Prevent the horrible multiplication of economic and social costs that happens when problems are exported from one unit operation to another, or worse, from the producing system to its "paying customers."

The identification of unit operations and key variances will lead to the identification of new options for controlling those variances.

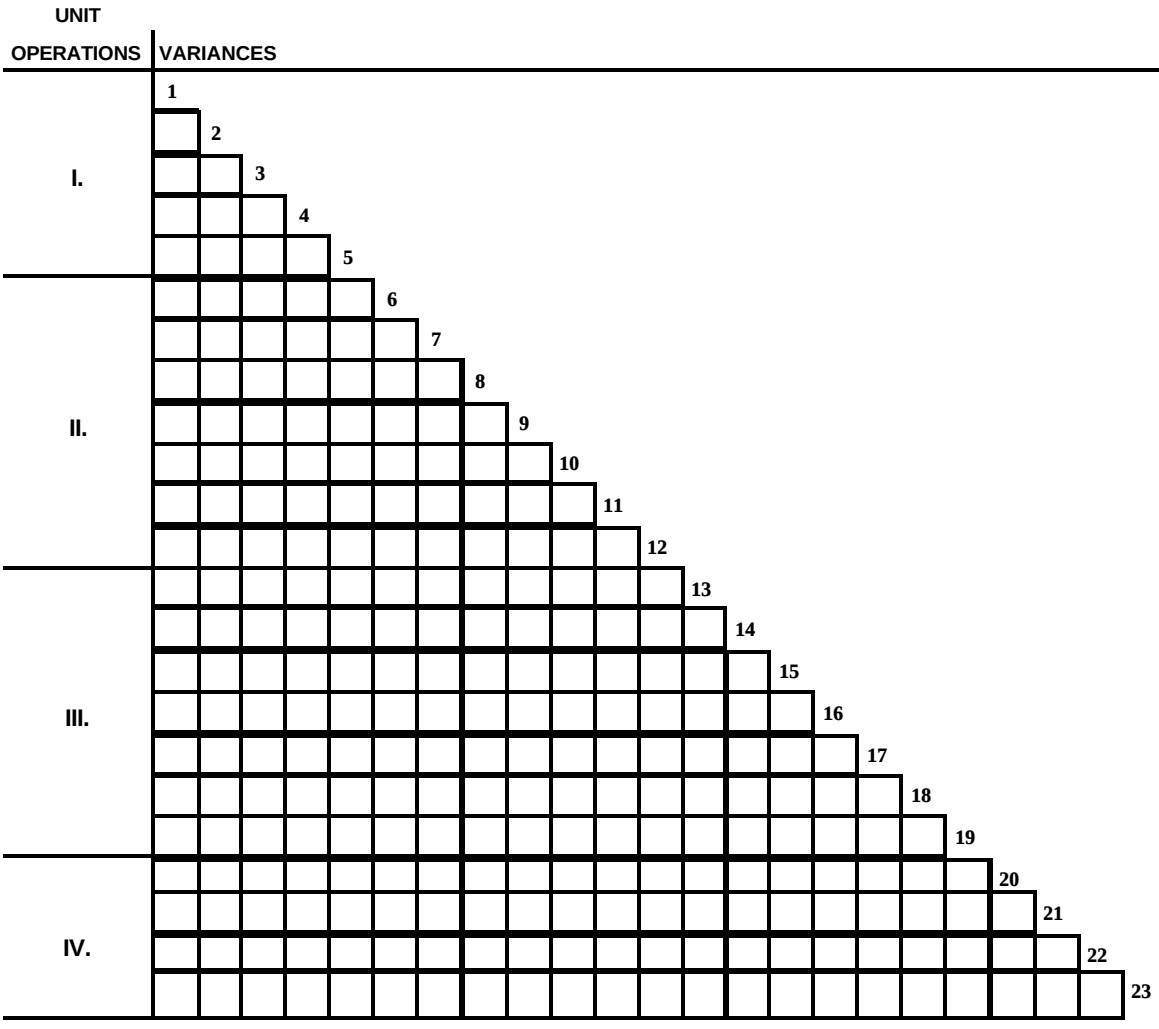
After you have completed the variance matrix for your team system's transformation process, you will take a look at how those variances might be brought under better control through improving the technology and/or the work system design of your team.

Team Inputs	Boundary Location	Standards Cost, Quantity, Quality

Team Outputs	Boundary Location	Standards Cost, Quantity, Quality

STS
INTERNATIONAL

TECHNICAL VARIANCE MATRIX



Identify key variances based on the following:

Interrelatedness Frequency

Impact Cost

STS
INTERNATIONAL

VARIANCE CONTROL TABLE

Key Variance: _____

Where Occurs: _____

Where Observed: _____

Where Controlled: _____

Controlled By: _____

Activities Required to Control	Information Required to Control	Suggestions for Changes to Job Design or Technology

Describe team process for controlling each key variance:

Key Variances	Selected Control Process

Team Action	Who is responsible?	Target/Action Date

SOCIAL SYSTEM

An Analysis

TEAMWORK

Separation, frustration, crossed wires, and red tape are the norm in many teams today. The economic and social costs are enormous. Worse, these costs are often un-counted, built into the very structure of the team. But these "hidden taxes" do not go unpaid. They, too, are part of the bill, part of the unavoidable and escalating price of poor team design.

It doesn't have to be that way.

For an alternative that works, follow the thinking of modern system designers:

The team is there to serve as the connecting and coordinating link between the demands of the technical transformation process and those of the environment in which the team must operate. The people, then, are central to the effectiveness of the system as a whole. How are their talents and energies to be used?

Traditional designs treat people like machines. Conventional organizations feature small, specialty jobs, and lots of them; separate specialty departments, with high walls between them; long chains of reporting relationships, and "control" from the distant top. In these old-style organization structures, people are made small. Their contributions to the system are small, too, if they can be seen at all. Employees in these systems spend a lot of time and energy "working through channels," waiting for orders, and playing bureaucratic games, instead of working on the product.

In the new model, people are enlarged. They are restored to their place as masters of the machine— as controllers of an important technical process. Their energies are focused sharply on the work itself. And their contributions are direct, significant, and obvious.

The new model draws out the best of people by treating them as people: multi-talented, thinking, growing, creative, interacting, interdependent, and "whole" systems in themselves. Rather than separating the "parts," and imposing control from outside, the new model emphasizes the teamwork and self-regulation of which people are uniquely capable.

The self-managing team is the ideal. The team is organized to include all of the resources it needs to manage its own work directly—to control variances at the source. The team is charged with managing its own affairs, including most, if not all, of its own day-to-day problem-solving, work

assignment and conflict resolution tasks. Members are typically encouraged to learn and to use all of the skills necessary in the work unit.

Work designs built around ideas like these recognize that the system depends upon the people who operate it. In fact, the more sophisticated or complex the technology, the more the system is dependent on the "human factor."

What about the bottom line? The cost of organizing work around self-managing teams is much less than the costs of the traditional organizational form, in both social and economic terms. Organization charts are flattened. The many costs associated with communicating, expediting, inspecting, checking, and supervising go way down.

The savings add up in other ways as well: Key variances are understood and controlled where they happen. There is no wasteful conflict between individual and unit goals, nor between the goals of one unit and those of the next. The common goal is to control variances in the process.

Structuring the organization around self-sufficient and self-managing work teams helps keep the system integrated. Cooperation, coordination, and shared responsibility are built into the design. Response time, adaptability, flexibility, and system maintenance are all improved as a result.

But coming up with the optimum system design is not quite as easy as deciding to lean toward self-managing workgroups. The right team structure and work role design will be the one that best fits together all the requirements of the system.

Every system is different. Each has a unique environment, calling for a unique adaptive response capability. Technologies vary too. Every technical system puts unique demands and constraints on the people in the system.

Finally, the people themselves come to the organization with their own set of special capabilities, needs, interests, and expectations. These, too, must be taken into account. The design that manages to deal most effectively with all of these factors will be the design that is built on the most thorough, three-dimensional analysis. Environmental and technical system analysis are discussed elsewhere.

Briefly, here's what's involved in social system analysis:

THE SOCIAL SYSTEM TEAM GRID

The social system grid on the page following this text is used here as the basic organizing scheme for social system analysis.

The left vertical axis of the grid lists the four primary functions that must be performed by any social system if it is to survive. These functions have been identified as goal attainment, adaptation, integration, and "latency" (or long-term development, renewal, and maintenance). For short: GAIL.

Across the top horizontal axis of the grid are listed four kinds of organizational relationships: supervisor-subordinate, within-group, between-groups, and member relationships with outsiders. The grid, then, has 16 cells to be completed.

A different grid is used for the analysis of every "focal team role" to be analyzed. Focal roles are typically identified after completion of the technical system analysis. Roles found to be of major importance in key variance control are tagged as the "focal team roles," meaning that social system analysis will be conducted around these roles as the central components of the social system.

Cell entries in the social system grid list specific, observable examples of what is said, done, or shown (or *not* said, done, or shown) in that role relationship, regarding that particular system function.

For the goal attainment cells, for example, one can easily transfer information about key variance control items directly from the variance control table. This information is entered under the appropriate "relationship" heading: G-1, for example, is used when referring to how key variances are managed between the worker in the focal role and his or her supervisor; G-2 when discussing the degree to which variance issues are dealt with by the peer group, and so on. In effect, the four cells for goal attainment, (which include goal setting, planning, communication, and execution activities) will almost "write themselves." Most of the information needed will have already been gathered by the design team.

But filling in the rest of the picture is not always so easy. The team members may know the social system well enough, from their own personal experience, but to design all the team's social processes is quite another task. It takes all the members to do it well.

SOCIAL SYSTEM

Team Grid

Instructions: 1. Specify the team focal role to be designed. **2.** Make entries into each cell for that focal role pertaining to GAIL and the relationships on the top horizontal axis. Write specific, observable examples of what is typically done, said, or shown in that relationship. **3.** Talk with others in that role to verify data. **4.** Develop a process to improve the social process in each area.

FOCAL ROLE: _____

RELATIONSHIPS FUNCTION	COACH TEAM MEMBER ù	WITHIN TEAM ø	BETWEEN TEAMS ÷ ²	WITH OUTSIDERS ù ø ø
GOAL ATTAINMENT (G)				
ADAPTABILITY TO EXTERNAL EVENTS OUTSIDE OF TEAM (A)				
INTEGRATION OF INTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS (I)				
LONG-TERM MAINTENANCE & DEVELOPMENT (L)				

STS
INTERNATIONAL

A Questionnaire on Team Maturity

Instructions: Check as many of the following characteristics as you feel your team is currently experiencing.

1. Objectives poorly set ___
2. Resistance to change ___
3. Members protect the team ___
4. Selective listening ___
5. Aligned with the needs of the stakeholders ___
6. Blaming others for production problems ___
7. Failure and mistakes expected ___
8. Pride and satisfaction ___
9. Fuzzy goals ___
10. Little care for others ___
11. Looking for new opportunity ___
12. Who says we should change? ___
13. Evaluations made outside meetings ___
14. New members welcomed ___
15. Self-serving team members ___
16. Strong need for structure ___
17. Goals are imposed on us ___
18. Need permission to act ___
19. Strong opinions shared respectfully ___
20. Polite conversations ___
21. Little listening ___
22. Conflicts unresolved ___
23. Outside input is welcomed ___
24. Supervisor/leader has the power ___
25. Suspicion ___
26. Bids for power ___
27. Authority is questioned ___
28. Real feelings shared outside ___
29. Strong need for approval ___
30. Happy, vital and rewarded ___
31. Authority is central ___
32. Feelings kept to oneself ___
33. Development is a waste of time ___
34. Conflicts resolved by voting ___
35. Confusion and stress ___
36. Misdirected energy ___
37. Lack of stability ___
38. Flexibility ___
39. It's up to "them" ___
40. Second guessing ___
41. Commitment debated ___
42. All team members contributing ___
43. Success emulated by others ___
44. Hidden agendas ___
45. Mistakes defended at all costs ___
46. Conformance to the established line ___
47. Informality and respect ___
48. Goal is to make it through the day ___
49. Alliance to myself only ___
50. Purpose is central ___
51. Hidden feelings ___
52. Clear common objective ___
53. Alliances and cliques formed ___
54. Discussions focus on the past ___
55. Outside help expected ___
56. Little thinking ___
57. Trust and openness ___
58. In-fighting/Attacks at authority ___
59. Objectives not known/cared about ___
60. Burn-out ___
61. Personal weaknesses ignored/ covered-up ___
62. Open to purposeful change ___
63. Set own goals to achieve overall objectives. ___
64. Lack of trust ___
65. Cohesiveness ___
66. Resistant to outside input ___
67. Mistakes are used as evidence ___
68. Personal weaknesses attacked ___
69. Fear of change ___
70. Whole system is important ___
71. Leadership discussed behind their backs ___
72. We can handle anything ___
73. Nit-picking ___
74. Shared leadership ___
75. Active listening ___
76. Not working in a unified way ___
77. Act, regardless of the consequences ___
78. Protecting knowledge from others ___
79. Act in awareness and responsibility ___
80. Outside help is required ___
81. High goal attainment ___
82. Mistakes are made but eagerly examined ___
83. Appreciate each other's talents and skills ___
84. Pioneering spirit felt in team ___

STS
INTERNATIONAL

Scoring the Questionnaire

Part 1—Team Maturity Assessment . . . . . .

Characteristic	Questionnaire #'s	Number Circled	% of Total Circled
Dependent	6, 9, 10, 13, 16, 18, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 29, 31, 32, 36, 39, 44, 46, 48, 49, 51, 54, 55, 56, 59, 61, 69, 80		
Counter-Dependent	1, 2, 3, 4, 12, 15, 17, 26, 27, 33, 34, 35, 37, 40, 41, 45, 53, 58, 60, 64, 66, 67, 68, 71, 73, 76, 77, 78		
Interdependent	5, 7, 8, 11, 14, 19, 23, 28, 30, 38, 42, 43, 47, 50, 52, 57, 62, 63, 65, 70, 72, 74, 75, 79, 81, 82, 83, 84,		
	TOTALS		100%

Part 2—Team Process Breakout . . . . . .

Characteristic	Questionnaire #'s	Number Circled	% of Total Circled
Goal Attainment			
Dependent	9 - 24 - 29 - 36 - 48 - 55 - 59		
Counter-Dependent	1 - 17 - 26 - 40 - 45 - 67 - 73		
Inter-Dependent	7 - 8 - 43 - 52 - 63 - 81 - 82		
Adaptability			
Dependent	16 - 18 - 31 - 39 - 46 - 54 - 80		
Counter-Dependent	2 - 12 - 27 - 37 - 58 - 66 - 77		
Inter-Dependent	5 - 23 - 38 - 50 - 62 - 72 - 79		
Integration			
Dependent	6 - 13 - 21 - 22 - 32 - 49 - 61		
Counter-Dependent	4 - 15 - 34 - 41 - 53 - 68 - 76		
Inter-Dependent	14 - 28 - 47 - 57 - 65 - 70 - 75		
Long Term Development			
Dependent	10 - 20 - 25 - 44 - 51 - 56 - 69		
Counter-Dependent	3 - 33 - 35 - 60 - 64 - 71 - 78		
Inter-Dependent	11 - 19 - 30 - 42 - 74 - 83 - 84		
	Totals		100%

BUILDING A PLAN

After exploring the concepts, building, understanding, and agreeing together on where our team should develop, we need to put this information into an actionable format and begin to move from Quadrant 2 to Quadrant 3. The action plan involves three major parts:

First: Identifying the most important "gaps" between our development goals and objectives.

Second: Setting short term goals and ways to measure our progress.

Third: Do it, Do it, and Re-do it.

Development of new skills, abilities, and habits, whether personal or for the team, is the "great divide" between awareness and competency, between knowing and doing, and between hypocrisy and integrity. It has been said "Those that can—Do. Those that can't—Teach." I think that is gravely miss spoken. Teaching a team, especially one which is to perform efficiently and effectively, requires competent leaders who have taken the developmental journey and are willing to go on it again with the team.

There is no "magic formula" to making the plan effective. There are several suggestions which we offer:

- Keep it Simple and Straight-forward (KISS)
- Focus on the "Critical Few" (Pareto Principle—20% of the problems account for 80% of the results)
- Set Goals together, with the team
- Measure it yourself, when it's happening. After-the-fact measures rarely give you the information quick enough to adapt, integrate, and attain.
- Depend on each other and set regular, focused follow-up.
- Review, re-set, and refocus within 6 months.

STS
INTERNATIONAL

TEAMING SKILLS

Personal Skill Promoting Group Effectiveness

MEETING EFFECTIVENESS
Self Rating
1 2 3 4 5

My ability to help a group come together, focus on the issues or purpose, establish meaningful roles and ground rules, use time effectively, involve and engage each member, measure their results, and meet their objectives.

BRAINSTORMING
Self Rating
1 2 3 4 5

My ability to help the group listen to all ideas openly, seek unusual possibilities, be creative, refrain from judging the merits of the ideas, build onto previous ideas, and think beyond previous boundaries and constraints.

PROBLEM SOLVING
Self Rating
1 2 3 4 5

My ability to work within the group to identify and clarify the problem, investigate root causes, analyze possible alternatives, weigh benefits and costs, compare against the stated objectives, collect meaningful data, and agree on solutions.

PLANNING/ ORGANIZING
Self Rating
1 2 3 4 5

My ability to help identify what needs to be done, establish priorities, set a timetable for accomplishing the tasks, make assignments, review progress, and follow through to meet the objectives.

DECISION MAKING
Self Rating
1 2 3 4 5

My ability to work with the group to review all pertinent information, listen to clearly understand each point of view, openly share biases and concerns, value personal and group needs, decide together and fully support that decision.

ASSESSING RESULTS
Self Rating
1 2 3 4 5

My ability to help get clear on what has to be accomplished, set goals that are both objective and subjective, establish a scale for measurement, benchmark their current state, regularly review results and progress.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION
Self Rating
1 2 3 4 5

My ability to help sort through differences that are getting in the way of the group's ability to accomplish tasks synergistically and collaboratively.

GIVING FEEDBACK
Self Rating
1 2 3 4 5

My ability to provide straightforward, honest, and helpful feedback to other members of the group in a respectful and developmental manner and to confront difficult issues with integrity and share responsibility for results.

RECEIVING **FEEDBACK**

Self Rating
1 2 3 4 5

My ability to hear and receive feedback from members of the group openly and non-defensively, seek to understand the key elements of the feedback, and respond to the feedback through responsible actions and commitments.

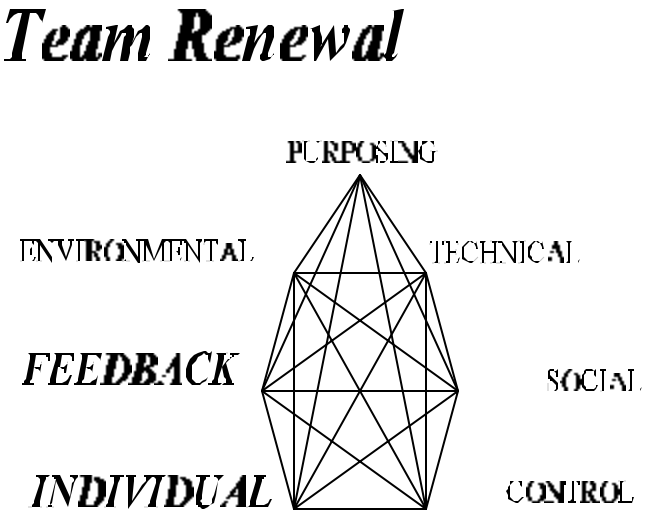
DECISIVENESS

Self Rating
1 2 3 4 5

My ability to take action and help the group move forward by listening to itself, agreeing on key elements, selecting a path, deciding and moving on. Helping to avoid waffling, false starts, and gridlock while allowing for constant field adjustments.

TEAM RENEWAL

DESIGNING FEEDBACK PROCESSES FOR INDIVIDUAL AND SYSTEM CONGRUENCE



High performing teams continually grow, develop, and renew. First, they recognize that the individuals within the team are the sole source of competence, innovation, creativity, spontaneity, and vitality. If the employees are stale, so is the team. If individuals have fire in their eyes, so does the team. For the company to be alive, so must its people and the team reaps its harvest from the seeds of inspiration and cultivation of encouragement which it garnishes on its members.

Second, the team must be in constant, visceral contact with its environment, its customers, competition, regulators, etc. But more than just being in contact, the team must continually adjust its processes and products to match the ever increasing demands of this environment. High performing teams maintain growth, competitiveness, and hope for the future through effective individual and feedback processes.

THEORY INPUT

Individuals, teams, and organizations all have needs. Just as the acorn had the need of warmth, sunshine, nutrients, and water; each individual member of our team has both common and unique needs. Research and practical application have demonstrated that quality of working life in teams is dependent on attainment of 4 C's.

Centrality: Team members know how their work contributes to the central purpose of the team and the organization as a whole.

Competence: Team members possess, demonstrate, and experience success in their team roles. Each member knows they are good at what they do and the new system they have designed allows for broader contribution and continual growth and development.

Commitment: Team members have designed and built their purpose, producing process, and defined their products and services. Having built it, individuals are now interdependent with it, providing congruence between what they do and who they are.

Control: Team members understand and embrace self control. Team members have the information, knowledge, power, team support, and rewards to insure system control and performance.

Within the context of the 4 C's is a fifth "C," **Congruence**, that makes it possible for the team to achieve quality of working life. In order to maintain understanding of and ability to manage quality of working life in the team, individuals will need to practice congruent communication. Simply, individuals must openly report what needs they have within each of the 4 C's and at what level these are now being attained or met by the team. Through this sharing, teams will identify what opportunities exist to provide greater opportunities for personal competence, challenge, meaningful work, creativity, freedom,and satisfaction. In other words, self and team actualization.

The feedback process is the heart of renewal. Feedback helps the team maintain both balance and fit between the other six core processes. Without it, the team dies. Often times its hard to get open, honest, and supportive feedback. And when it is available—we may not want or open ourselves to it.

Psalm 51:6 states, "We are not to delude ourselves and say something is true when it is not." Organizations, teams, and individuals require feedback to survive, grow, and prosper.

Providing and soliciting feedback is a challenge for all. Rarely do we find individuals or teams that embrace this concept and what it involves. Feedback can cause us to reconsider our rightness, values, beliefs, or position. For growth to happen, we must understand its usefulness and incorporate the concept into our teams.

The most effective feedback systems are those that provide information on a continual basis. We know we change, and our environment and stakeholders change too. These changes require action on our part, and can only be known and realized by developing real and meaningful feedback systems.

PRIMARY TASK

Effective teams find ways to satisfy their stakeholders and their team members. This core process will assist the team in identifying, clarifying, and sharing individual team member needs in order to increase effectiveness and quality of work life.

As a team, develop a feedback system to monitor and audit performance of the team, its seven core processes, individual maturity, team growth, and mission attainment.

GETTING STARTED

- Make sure everyone has read the material in this section.
- Establish and agree on the objectives for your team in this section.
- Use the resource material provided to enable the team to get started. Do not rely on this material as the answer…it is only a guide.

TEAM OUTPUTS

As a team, discuss and develop a strategy to deal with and accomplish the following tasks:

- Identification of the skill competencies that contribute directly to controlling key variances to include technical, social, business, and personal.

- Develop a feedback system to collect and analyze data on the team's current performance in the areas of:
  - External-internal stakeholder demands
  - Individual team member needs
  - Team growth and education
  - Seven core process integration

- Use this data to identify individual and team changes needed to promote greater personal growth and purpose attainment and increase intra team cooperation and coordination.

- Develop a system to provide feedback to other teams, support groups, and managers on our performance and promote inter team cooperation and coordination.

DESIRED TEAM PROCESS

- Select a process that will help the team deal with these tasks.

- Discussion and understanding of how our processes for individual and team feedback fit with the other core processes.

- A means to share your unique learnings with the other workshop teams.

PERSONAL LEADERSHIP OUTPUTS/PROCESS

At the end of the work session with your team, utilize the core competency assessment process to:

- Assess your own performance and growth in each area.
- Receive feedback from each member of your team in each area.
- Receive feedback from an outside observer in each area.
- Identify one or two key improvements you would like to make in your core competencies within the team, discuss them with the team, and plan how to move in that direction.

KEY LEARNINGS

When properly completed, the individual needs core process should provide team members with the following key learnings:

- Individual needs are similar, yet unique.
- Needs change as we grow.
- Blaming others does not allow for need attainment.
- Each person is responsible for sharing their needs.
- Common ground is not as important as common understanding.
- Mature teams ask what needs individuals have and try to satisfy them.
- Feedback is the “breakfast of champions.”
- It can be done in a positive, helpful, and supportive way.
- Feedback is hard work, but well worth the effort in growth and development.
- The more one does it, the easier it gets.

STS
INTERNATIONAL

THE FOUR C'S

Building Quality of Work Life

Building an effective team requires that individuals on that team understand purpose, feel committed to the purpose, feel valued, and have control. Development of a team based system utilizing the Four C's can attain that. The Four C's (shown below) are interrelated concepts that together build an environment capable of achieving high quality of working life.

1. Recognized **COMPETENCE** at the workplace.
2. Acknowledged **CENTRALITY**, or real relevance in applying that competence.
3. Shared **COMMITMENT** to the purposes of the enterprise.
4. Joint **CONTROL** over the product and process.

The concept of *competence* deals with one's feelings of pride in his/her work abilities. Traditional organization design weakened the concept of competence by breaking jobs into small parts and disconnecting people from the whole. Separation from the whole product and from other departments weakened the awareness of how one fits in. Team designed systems, focused on the whole product or purpose, increases the connection between what I do and the results attained.

The understanding of purpose, control of key variance, and how my role helps achieve these is competence. Team members in control of key variances are good at what they do, and they know they have this capability because of training and learning on the job.

Centrality refers to having everyone on the team involved in key variance control and understanding that this is the center of the team enterprise. This stems from the team recognizing the definition of key variances as the most important aspect of producing the product.

When centrality in the process is tied to control of key variances, the connection between centrality and competence is self evident. Learning to be competent in the skills and knowledge required to control key variances leads to high performance in tasks, defined by everyone in the team, to be central to its success.

Commitment to the values and goals of the team is the third part of team quality of working life. Through an open systems approval to team design where people understand its purpose, producing process, and values, loyalty can emerge. Commitment can only be developed through involvement and open discussion. People need to understand the team's purpose and their role in it to build cooperation and commitment through involvement.

Control within a team can be achieved through understanding of the product and process. The social process within any team relies on the sharing of power and influence. Power equalization through participation and influence over work are two critical issues for effective team management of control.

The combination of control over process through understanding and influence over others through the authority of knowledge and competence has been found to be a potent source of individual equality of working life in teams.

FEEDBACK

A Closer Look

Organizations, teams, and individuals all require renewal. Attainment of renewal requires continuous feedback from both internal and external sources.

For the *organization*, feedback is critical to maintain effective leadership and alignment with the external environment. Adaptability can only be achieved when we understand as a system what is happening in the environment we depend on for survival. Organizations that design effective data collection and feedback systems to stay in touch with the external environment have a better chance for survival than those that don't. To stay in touch, organizations can look to the following sources:

- The Customer
- The Competitors
- The Suppliers
- The Community
- The Corporation and Sister Plants
- The Government Regulation Agencies

Building effective feedback systems with these critical stakeholders will begin renewal.

The *team* must also be open to the concept of renewal through feedback. Just as the larger organization must grow and adapt, so must the team. Teams must devise a feedback system to tap into what the larger organization knows about external customers, competitors, suppliers, etc, but also must develop a feedback system with internal customers, suppliers, support teams, and the larger system. A team is not an island, it is woven into the fabric of the larger system, and, hence, is dependent on that larger system for survival.

Teams like organizations and individuals do go through growth stages. These growth stages are often initiated by feedback, and as such, can be viewed as a renewal process. A helpful way to look at team growth is by reviewing the team against the categories of:

Dependency. The beginning stages of dependency on others is initially characterized by adventure, apprehension, excitement, and enthusiasm. Team members attempt to clarify their hopes and fears and identify the norms and ground rules by which they intend to operate. At this stage, members usually feel that they have little or no control. They are polite and submissive and look to the "established line" for direction and leadership.

Counterdependency. As team members gain a better appreciation of their new roles and become more comfortable with their own work requirements, they begin to challenge the existing authority structure. Some decide that they no longer need superiors and bosses. This counter dependence toward others outside their team is displayed rebellion, blaming others and management for their problems, as well as challenging the new design. So much energy, both physical and emotional, is expended in resolving these issues that a "burnout" or "peaking out" syndrome often follows.

Interdependency. As team members begin to resolve internal conflicts and discover that they must take responsibility for their own behavior, a new sense of dependency on others outside their team is realized. External relationships are revisited and revised and the larger purpose is viewed in light of the interdependent parts. The team itself stabilizes and views the new design and the organization more realistically. The excitement, "easy fix" mentality, and the fighting are gone. New, redefined attitudes and approaches toward other teams, departments and management begin to emerge. Teams begin to accept responsibility for solving their own problems.

Team renewal can be achieved through each team continually assessing which category most represents their behavior and actions. The more the team focuses on fulfillment of mission and control of key variances, the easier it is to achieve interdependency with others.

Individual maturity is an essential element of team and organization maturity. Teams cannot grow up unless its members do. When people join an organization or team, they are still in the process of growing and maturing and developing. This is the process of continuous learning, unlearning and relearning. Through this process, renewal takes place for each of us.

As we stated earlier, at the heart of renewal is feedback. For individuals to grow, the team needs to develop feedback systems that reliably help its members understand how their behavior affects mission attainment, variance control and team quality of working life. While each team member has individual needs, these must be balanced against the team and organization's needs.

Organizations and teams are human inventions that require continuous feedback to renew. Your team is made up of interdependent parts that have to be continually examined, redefined and integrated for both internal and external congruence. Building a feedback-renewed process that works, requires the efforts of everyone. After all, it's your team, your success, your survival that's at stake. . .so let's be real.

STS
INTERNATIONAL

THE PROBLEM PERSON

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP

Effective workgroups try to adopt the position that *there are no problem members*.

These groups look upon dysfunctional behavior that hinders their effectiveness as a *group* problem: a problem the group allows, or even wants, rather than the result of a "problem member."

A person who continually introduces irrelevant ideas, for example, can only get the group off its topic if the other group members follow the lead. Instead of calling the member the problem, the group must ask itself why it has allowed itself to get off the topic. Perhaps the other members welcome these digressions as a way of avoiding the open conflict that might occur if they stayed on the topic.

Likewise, the person who talks too much, jokes too much, continually attacks others, or never participates. These are signs of *group* problems. The whole group needs to discuss whether it is rewarding such behavior, and ways it might go about eliminating these disruptions.

Such a group gives helpful information to its members about the impact of their actions. But it does not analyze, dissect or work them over.

Raising issues and dealing with them openly, as a group, has beneficial aspects that far outweigh the temporary feelings of tension that might come with such open discussion. It puts things out on the table, where they can be dealt with. It clears the air. It allows group members the opportunity to explore all the facts, rationale and feelings behind the conflict, and to make better decisions as a result.

You'll know if your group has a problem with this "rule" when sub-groups begin holding "parking-lot meetings"—when the conflict, differences and clearly-expressed ideas happen outside, in the parking lot, and not during the meeting. That's the time to get it back where it belongs, where it can do the group some good.

Effective groups work on conflicts as a group.

HOW TO HANDLE "THE PROBLEM PERSON"

Someone in the group is behaving in a destructive, distracting, or otherwise counter-productive manner. And the group allows it. Now what?

As a team member, you have three basic options:

IGNORE IT

For a short time, or in particular instances where an intervention from you would itself be counter-productive, this option may be your only reasonable course. But for you to retain a non-helpful stance for long—perhaps out of your *own* fear of confrontation—would be to retreat from your responsibility as a helpful team player.

CHANGE THE PERSON

Whether you choose to exercise this option directly or indirectly, in private or in the group, in bluntly-confrontive language or through sublime subtlety, this choice may result in a "lose-lose" outcome, for the group and for the person. The strategy of trying to change "the other guy" is analogous to that of teams trying to solve somebody else's problem. It doesn't work.

People resist *being changed* - from outside forces—and become defensive or withdrawn when told, in effect, "you're not okay," or "*you* are rejected." Too often, "change the person" strategies result only in reducing or disregarding the person's strengths. This, in turn, diminishes the person's value and contribution to the group.

STRENGTHEN THE GROUP

This will enable all the members to manage counter-productive behavior better. Basically, this option says to the group: "It's your job to get your job done, and to manage (cope with) the people and things that are problems for you."

When you've chosen this way of participating, you're confronting the members of the whole group with an opportunity to grow, from within themselves, on their own terms. This is how it should be, a team problem.

NEXT STEP

Now that you've chosen your approach, have a method ready by which the group might learn to help itself. Keep in mind the teams injunction to focus on the work itself, the task, and *not* on the personalities involved.

See the suggested process on the insert.

A PROCESS

There are many ways you might proceed. Here is one method that has worked well for other groups:

I.

Ask the group whether or not they share your feeling that the group could benefit from a fresh look at "how we're working together."

II.

Produce the group's own list of "ground rules" (if they have such a list), review the items and clarify that these ground rules (one person-one vote, everybody participates, etc.) represent what the members themselves want and expect from each other.

Note that while these goals are well-understood and highly desirable, it is still a difficult "growing process" for us to always measure up to such expectations. It couldn't be done at all if the expectations were too high or unreasonable.

But improvement and growth as a productive group *is* always possible so long as we're willing to take it on directly and honestly with each other.

It helps each of us if *all* of us share in the goal of supporting the development of the whole group and each of its members.

III.

Each member takes a copy of the "Team Development Grid" (or a similar recording sheet of your own design). Clarify the process below and gain agreement.

(a) ***Instructions***: Describe actual behavior only; no evaluative language, "shoulds" or guessing-at-motives.

(b) ***List***: Each person in the group fills out a separate development grid sheet for themselves.

(c) ***Exchange***: When everyone is finished, exchange lists (each person collects all the lists pertaining to themselves).

(d) ***Display***: Each person uses flip chart-size paper to make a consolidated list of all inputs directed toward him/her; these are then posted on the walls.

(e) ***Clarification***: Each person in turn reviews their list with the group, asking for clarification on any items they do not understand. This is for clarification only: no reply, rebuttal, challenge or defense is allowed.

(f) ***Demonstration***: It should be explicitly stated that members may feel uneasy now, and in the next step. Recognize too that not all (or *any*) demands on us from others *have* to be accepted.

Next, write at the top of a flipchart sheet:

"AGREEMENTS: For my own growth and that of the group, I will…" Understand that this is now time for *unilateral* (personal) decision-making. Write your own name on the sheet, followed by a statement of the behavior changes you yourself are willing to make. This need not include all requests, nor must you explain why *this* item is agreed-to and *that* one is not (though you *may* explain your decisions if you wish).

Sit down. It is not necessary or desirable for you to direct or otherwise "compel" members to come forward. Adopt a supportive and helpful manner.

Some members may *not* come forward, and that's okay too: personal growth comes through slow internal struggle; it cannot be forced, even by the person involved, to come before its time.

(g) Each group member in turn shares his/her own perceptions and feelings on this exercise (or to "pass", if they wish). Summarize at the end, adding comments on individual's discomfort, insights, pleasant feelings, etcetera.

STS
INTERNATIONAL

TEAM DEVELOPMENT GRID

For: _____
(Name)

Instructions: Have each team member complete one of these sheets. Then post and ask each team member to contribute their thoughts. Use behavior-descriptive language only. You may, if you wish, ask for the facilitator's help in wording your thoughts. Complete one of these sheets for each of the team members present. Use behavior-descriptive language only. You may, if you wish, ask for the facilitator's help in wording your thoughts.

Behavior description examples: "Keep asking for clarification when the group does something that's not clear to you." Or, "Stop joking with Les while the group is working on serious business." Do *not* use evaluative, emotional-laden or vague language about "attitudes" or feelings. (Do *not* say: "Be more sensitive," or "Keep being yourself," or "stop feeling paranoid.")

START	STOP	KEEP

I will: _____
_____

INDIVIDUAL CHANGE PROCESS

Continual Improvement requires continual change. Leading the change requires changing the leader. Initiating, implementing, accomplishing, and sustaining change requires individuals who are continually looking at themselves to improve, change, and grow and have developed, either purposefully or inherently, an Individual Change Process with the following key elements:

FELT NEED

People will change if they really feel the need to change. The need can be felt or experienced either:

Externally—Imposed on the individual by:
- Fear/Threat
- Punishment
- Crisis
- Guilt
- Coercion

Internally—Generated and owned internally with:
- Clear Data
- Feedback
- Information
- Vision of what you want to achieve
- Involvement
- Reward

Most felt need starts from externalized sources but must be internalized in order to have lasting effects. Change because of external sources is usually compliance rather than change. True change is driven from within, not without.

THIRD PARTY FEEDBACK

People need the involvement of a significant other person to get a clear view of their progress in achieving the change desired.

We can't go it alone
We are interdependent with the individuals around us
We cannot see ourselves clearly in our own mirror

A process which involves others will allow us to seek a balanced, 360 degree, three dimensional, historical and visionary perspective. We may then choose our responses and take the necessary course corrections to move forward in our changes.

RECOMMITMENT AND RENEWAL

People can sustain change over the long haul if they establish processes that help them:

Move from the general to the specific
Move to new connections and ties
Move from either/or to both/and
Differentiate and distinguish improvement
Move toward self-esteem and self-confidence
Build on interdependent relationships
Move from external to internal commitment

STS
INTERNATIONAL

HELP / HINDER

A Team Approach for Providing Feedback

The Socio-Technical approach to building a team, in fact any approach to building a team, requires that the team have a process for providing and receiving feedback to and from its members. There is no "magic wand" which will provide this process to a team. There is no "one and only" process which is most successful. What is essential in building such a process is that several principles are valued and protected.

The Help/Hinder process is designed to help "balance" a persons own perceptions of how his behavior is affecting the team against how the team perceives his behavior. But it goes one step farther, it asks the team to evaluate the impact of team member behaviors on the individual and balances this assessment with the individuals feedback to the team.

Sound complicated? Possibly. Sound confusing? Might be. But since making any feedback effective is an essential task for the high performing team, this process may help the team explore some new ground on the way to creating its own, highly effective, useful and unique individual feedback process.

HELP HINDER PROCESS

The following is one method for discussing, within a team, a specific team member problem. Remember, we can best understand and resolve a difficult situation if we assumed that it is a "team problem" which "we" are together to resolve, rather than a problem team member which "we" are going to "fix."

- The team member seeking feedback fills out Part A and notes:
  - "Things I feel the team members do that help me as an employee."
  - "Things I feel the team members do that hinder my performance within the team."
  - "Things I feel I am doing to help the team or members of the team."
  - "Things I do that I realize are hindering the team or members of the team."

- Each team member fills out part B and notes:
  - "Things that I or other members of the team are doing which are meant to help the employee."
  - "Things that I or other members of the team are doing with we realize hinder the employee."

- "Things that I or other members of the team see the employee doing which are meant to help the team."
- "Things that I or other members of the team see the employee doing which we feel hinder the team in our performance or working together."

- All data is placed on 4 charts as follows:
  - What team does to help employee (1)
  - What team does to hinder employee (2)
  - What employee does to help team (3)
  - What employee does to hinder team (4)

- Each data point is discussed for understanding— < explained not defended. >

- Key points of concern are identified for both the employee and the team to work on.

- Key agreements are made:
  - What the employee commits to the team that he/she will do to:
  - Keep helping the team in key areas
  - Stop hindering the team in key areas
  - What the team commits to the employee that they will do to:
    - Keep helping the employee in key areas
    - Stop hindering the employee in key areas

- Agree on a specific date to get together and review the commitments and progress made.

PART A—EMPLOYEE SEEKING FEEDBACK

PART B—TEAM MEMBERS

