

Insight: Resilience Toolkit 2 - Flexibility

Draft v 1.1

5th August 2015

Black Radley

A graphic element consisting of several overlapping, curved, light blue and white lines that create a sense of motion or a stylized wave, positioned below the company name.

Peter Latchford
Black Radley Ltd
peter_latchford@blackradley.com

www.blackradley.com

Tel: 0845-226-0363

1 The Flexible Culture Organisation

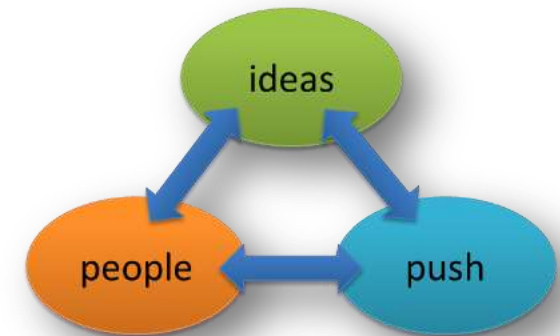
Our bodies need to be both fit and flexible, if we are to be fully healthy. A cultural organisation needs to be balanced (fit), the subject of Insight Toolkit 1. In response to unpredictable times and the need for commercial revenue, it also needs to be enterprising (flexible).

Good cultural enterprise results from the effective management and interplay of three themes.

There must be a continual flow of new **ideas**, new initiatives and new ways of doing things, into and through the organisation.

The right **people** must be in place, with the right attitudes, skills and teamwork, to turn the ideas into reality.

The organisational context must provide the right **push** to ensure the right ideas are made real.



2 Organisational Flexibility: The Theory

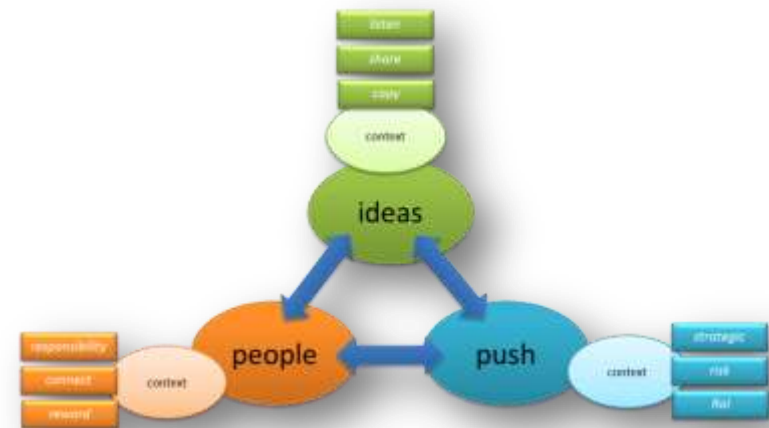
How We Do Things

For flexibility and enterprise to flourish in a culture organisation, its internal culture needs to be right. In simple terms, this means that its internal feel – its habits, feel, ways of thinking and doing – must encourage enterprising practice. This is “context”. There are three context domains under each of the three main themes of ideas, people and push.

As far as ideas go, do we **listen**? Are there effective processes in place for listening to the wants of customers and other stakeholders? Do we **share**? Are there effective processes in place for sharing ideas, successes and failures with other culture organisations? Do we shamelessly **copy**? Are there effective processes in place for borrowing and learning from other organisations’ practice?

When it comes to people, do we delegate **responsibility**? Does the organisation have a culture which allows effective people to get on and make their project work? Do we **connect**? Does the organisation stimulate and encourage soft links between specialisms within the culture organisation and with external partners? Do we **reward**? Does the organisation encourage people (even if only through gratitude) for driving new ideas forward?

Then there is the organisation’s drive, or push. Are we **strategic**? Is the organisation focused and clear about its proposition and target markets? Do we have the right attitude to **risk**? Does the organisation have effective risk management processes? Does the organisation have a **Return on Investment** philosophy? Does the organisation use such a perspective as a key part of all management decision making?



Enterprising Behaviours

A strong culture organisation does what it does in an enterprising fashion. Its day-to-day activities, the processes it defines and implements, the work on which its time is spent – these all support and enable flexibility and innovation. There are three behaviour domains under each of the three main themes of ideas, people and push.

For ideas, do we **generate** good new ideas from all sources? Does the organisation **filter** these ideas, assessing robustly which ones to go with? Are we able to **prioritise** ideas on the basis of financial, political and operational considerations?

From a people perspective, do we **fulfil** - is the organisation good at making things happen in line with plans? Are we good at working with **customers** and understanding their perspectives? Are we good at estimating, forecasting and modelling **numbers**?

From a management drive or push perspective, are we good at **starting** things? Is the organisation able to initiate and progress new ideas/initiatives/projects? Are we good at **stopping** things? Is the organisation able to review, prioritise and shut down ideas/initiatives/projects? Are we good at **learning** from this? Are we able to learn from successful and unsuccessful ideas/initiatives/projects?

Knowing What We Need to Know

A successful, flexible culture organisation keeps track of its changing world; it knows what it needs to know and constantly asks questions.

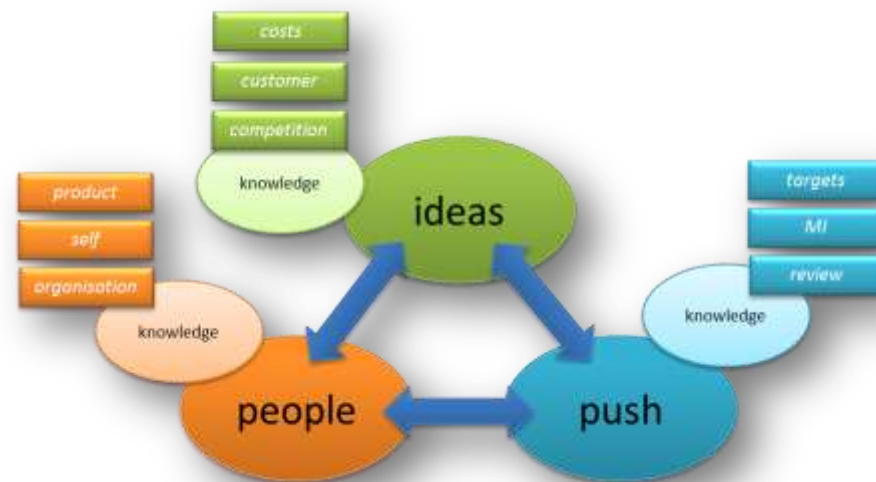
From an ideas perspective, do we know about **costs**? More specifically, does the organisation know how to construct a credible financial case? Are we clear who our core **customers** are? Do we know how to identify



relevant target markets? Is the organisation clear on its **competitors**? On what alternative uses the potential customer might have for their spend?

As far as our people are concerned, does the organisation know who has the best knowledge and experience relating to a specific **product**, idea or initiative? For the organisation as a whole, and in relation to a specific project or initiative, how good is our knowledge of **self** - do we know our strengths and weaknesses, technical and attitudinal? For any given project or development, does the team assigned have the necessary credibility and passion to steer the idea/initiative through this **organisation**?

From a management push perspective, have we defined the hard **targets** for what the organisation or the project should achieve? Do we know the clear, regular, timely and simple **management information** which we will use to track progress against the target? Do we know how you will **review** progress on a regular basis, identifying learning points and priority areas for attention?



3 Getting Enterprising

Taken together, these themes, headings and domains create an **Enterprise Framework**; a comprehensive checklist for managers which allows them to identify and track organisational responsiveness.



Practical Application

The model can also be used to underpin a one-off exercise: a deeper dive consultancy study, or diagnostic exercise; giving a picture of a culture organisation's enterprise performance and how improvement can be achieved. The organisation determines, using its own or external resources, where shortcomings may lie and where best returns will be achieved.

Team Exercise

Identify the individuals who have the strongest commercial instincts and/or greatest responsibility for future enterprise performance, regardless of their organisational status.

Set aside half a day for an enterprise workshop.

If the workshop goes well, this group could be asked to form a fixed term "task and finish" group, to build enterprise momentum throughout the organisation.

In the workshop, follow the steps set out below.

1. What is Enterprise here?

- Start by inviting members of the group to think about how the organisation currently feels from a commercial performance or enterprise perspective. What are the issues and irritants? It is important to get these out on the table at the outset before more positive themes can be discussed.
- As these themes are raised, write them up on a flipchart or screen.
- It may be necessary to spend some time discussing whether the organisation ought or ought not to have to be commercial in its orientation. It may be necessary to agree that it is at worst a necessary evil.
- Set out the enterprise theory as per Section 1. Start with the three main headings (people, push and ideas). Then flesh out each in turn, using the issues/irritants discussion to bring the content to life.

2. What holds us back?

- Invite the members individually to look at the Enterprise Framework and to identify the organisation's top three weaknesses using this picture (e.g. generating ideas, assessing risk, understanding our customers).
- Ask each member of the group to share their thinking.
- Collate the views and summarise the themes emerging.
- Invite the group to identify the main causes or features of their joint diagnosis.

3. Put the organisation in context

- Present the Insight charts.
- Discuss what they tell you in terms of the organisation's performance, good and bad, against comparable organisations.
- Discuss what how well current performance matches against the future environment.
- Revisit the discussion under item 2: are we better or worse than we think we are?
- Summarise the discussion. Identify the top enterprise improvement themes emerging from this benchmarking exercise.

4. Now identify key action headings:

- Invite the team, individually, to consider for each of the themes what one thing they would change in order to achieve a step change improvement.

- Ask each to share their thinking.
- Summarise this discussion: identify and name three major enterprise themes required if the organisation is to thrive.

5. Finally, get it started:

- Discuss and agree how the three key changes should be described in order to inspire the team and to make them uncomfortable with letting the status quo continue.
- Cross reference these main enterprise themes to the Enterprise Framework. Make sure each one is looked at from this wider perspective, to ensure key components are not ignored.
- For each of the three key changes, clarify what immediate steps can be taken to move the organisation in that direction.