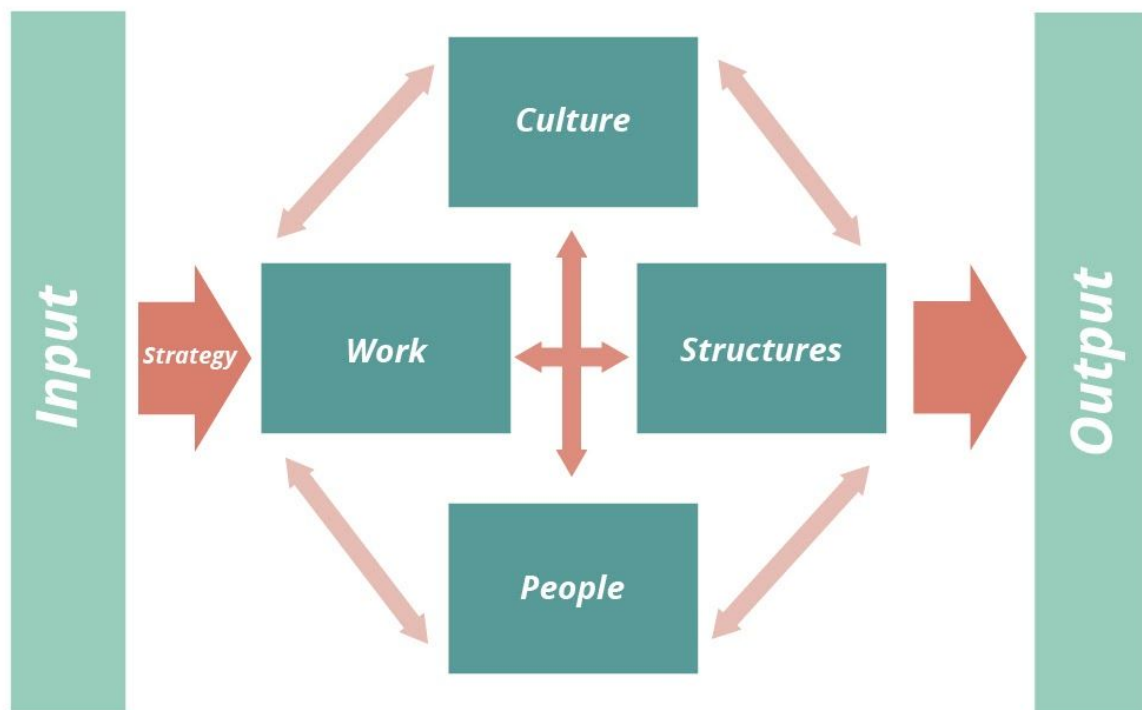


The Organisational Congruence Model by David Nadler & Michael Tushman

David Nadler and Michael Tushman developed their Congruence Model of Organisational Behaviour in the early 1980s. The central idea of their theory is that an organisation functions and performs better when all of its separate components 'fit' well together.

Their model is commonly drawn as a diagram, which visualises the organisation as a system that takes inputs and transforms them into outputs - a process that involves four basic components. The critical aspect of the model is the fit or congruence between these four components. Nadler & Tushman believe that an organisation can only turn its inputs (environment, strategy and resources) into its desired outputs (organisational, group and individual performance) if there is a good fit between its people, culture, structures and work.



The model can help organisations to manage change by encouraging them to consider the relationships between the four central components - and to see how changing one or more of these elements might have a knock-on effect on the others. For Nadler & Tushman, understanding these dynamic interdependencies is the key to achieving successful change.

The model provides six 'congruence relationships', each of which looks at how well two elements of the model 'fit'. Some examples are provided below:

Relationship	Issues
People-Structures	How are people's needs met by the organisation's structures and systems? Do people hold clear or distorted views of the organisation's structures and systems? Is there a convergence of individual and organisational goals?
People-Work	How are individual needs met by the work they perform? Do individuals have the skills and abilities to perform their work?
People-Culture	How are individual needs met by the organisation's culture?
Work-Structures	Do the structures and systems of the organisation facilitate the work being done? Do the structures and systems of the organisation motivate behaviours that are consistent with work requirements?
Work-Culture	Does the culture of the organisation facilitate the work being done?
Structures-Culture	Are the goals and rewards set out in the structures and systems of the organisation consistent with the organisation's culture?

Considering these relationships should provide some guidance and direction when it comes to managing organisational change.

For example, consider the possible impact of change on the relationship between work and people. If employees have the knowledge, skills and abilities required to perform the job at hand, you can expect a relatively high level of performance. But if a corporate restructure results in people being reassigned to different roles that do not match their particular skill sets, then performance levels are likely to suffer.

Alternatively, consider the relationship between people and culture. If a new, more autonomous way of working was introduced to an organisation where employees had previously been used to a culture of following strict rules and procedures, this would create a lack of 'fit' or congruence in the relationship which would in turn lead to poorer performance.

In most situations, organisations change only incrementally over time, and it is the manager's job to ensure that the 'fit' of the four main components remains good. However, where there is a radical or transformative change, one or more of the basic components may need to be completely overhauled to ensure they continue to 'fit' well together.

As Nadler and Tushman state:

"The question is not how to find the 'one best way' of managing, but to find effective combinations of components that will lead to congruent fits among them."

Reference

Nadler, D. A. & Tushman, M. L. (1980) A Model for Diagnosing Organizational Behaviour, Organisational Dynamics, Autumn.