LiQUiD

Light, Quick and Ultra-Dynamic

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Be water, my friend. (Bruce Lee)

Abstract

A proposal for real People Focus in organizing. The concept of LiQUiD is suitable in organizations where the people are the prime asset. It seeks to undermine power struggles in an organization and instead fosters cooperation and teamwork.

Document link: http://isene.com/liquid.pdf

Focus on the individual

What form should an organization take to maximize the potential of each employee? What is the ideal organization for a set of individuals? How can this question be answered if one does not know the potential of the individuals – their abilities and motivations? And if one knows the potential of each person, should they not be doing what they truly excel at?

Organizing should be based on the main assets of an organization. If the asset is a natural resource, such as a gold mine, then the business should be organized around the gold mine as the main value. If the main asset is a process, like that of the Toyota car manufacturer, then the business should be organized based on the process. If the real value of a company lies in a patent, it makes sense to structure the business to maximize the profit from that patent. And if the main asset is the individual employees, organization should be people focused.

Most companies have an organizing board – an ideal view of how an organization should work. It describes a functional machine where employees are made to fit within it. The ideal is the cooperation, the machine. This form may be the best if the machine is more important than the creative genius of each individual, or if the company has no such individuals. But if the company has creative geniuses, then *that* is the asset that should be the basis for organization.

So, instead of drawing the map and making the terrain fit the map, one could assess the terrain and draw a map that fits. Much like marriages have evolved – from set standards of what a woman and a man is each supposed to do – to the modern family where tasks are distributed across preconceived limits. Much like a local community where tasks are taken by those who are best at them. And much like most societies, where no overall organizing board exists to fit the people in a country into neat departments. The latter was tried in places like DDR (East Germany) and the Soviet Union. A liquid organizing of tasks and people seems to be the most scalable model there is.

Defined tasks are the results of clearly defined deliverables. A deliverable is what an area of responsibility is meant to produce or deliver as an output.

One could assess the employees of the company, their abilities and interests, and organize all deliverables around the people. And without any hierarchy of areas, every area of responsibility would be on a par with every other area. "Company profit" is a deliverable just like "Correct documentation". Deliverables have different importance and size, but represent no hierarchy in terms of organization.

Such a liquid organizing should ensure that the employee best suited for managing an area would be the one responsible. Add the concept of 100% responsibility and one would get employees who are fully in charge of their areas and the expected results of each. The map would be a wall with a line of photos. A list of deliverables under each picture tells what responsibilities each employee has. This puts the people in focus rather than the structure. It creates People Focus.

LiQUiD is Light, Quick and Ultra-Dynamic. It helps an organization adapt easily to new tasks or new employees or new business opportunities. Without a preconceived ideal for distribution of responsibilities, it is agile in the extreme. Like water.

LiQUiD flies in the face of standard organizing models. It is pure heresy. It spells the end of organizing as we know it. The next page presents a simple HYPERLIST[S] [1] outlining the basics in making an organization LiQUiD.

The color coding used in the HYPERLIST[S] includes turquoise for comments, green to indicate that an action is conditional (i.e. it may or may not apply), and purple to indicate a reference – a jump to a part of the list which includes the actions to be done at the point it was referenced.

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[1] HYPERLIST[S] : http://isene.com/hyperlist.pdf

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LiQUiD
   Important principles in the LiQUiD concept
      Main deliverables are defined and split into sub-deliverables
      Deliverables can be big or small and can be merged or split as needed
      There is no hierarchy in the organization of areas with defined deliverables
         EXAMPLE: Sales is an area just like Reception or Accounting
      Organizing is clarified by a list of deliverables for each employee
      An employee has 100% responsibility for his or her deliverables
      Ensure the employee is motivated to extend the comfort zone
      Foster a culture of directness, where saying "no" is also OK
   Organizing using LiQUiD
      Area definition
         Define deliverables (outputs) for the area
            Define good metrics for the deliverables
         Determine the required inputs for the deliverables
         Determine the authority needed for the area
         Assign 100% responsibility for each of the deliverables to the right person
            Measure the production of deliverables
            Handle low production according to "Processes, automation and human potential"
         EXAMPLES OF AREAS:
            Suggested mandatory areas:
               Accounting
               Delivery
               Legal
               Production
               Recruitment
               Sales
            Suggested additional areas:
               Change Management
               Knowledge Management
               Marketing
               Media handling
               Office premises
               Quality assurance
               Staff training
               Strategy generation
               Validation & Testing
               (Etc.)
      [Sub-areas needed]
         [Each sub-area] #'Area definition'
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Some of the suggested areas above are covered in the article, "ITIL - pragmatic and simple"[2]. The concepts of deliverables (outputs), motivation (inspiration) and 100% responsibility are covered in the article, "Processes, automation and human potential"[3].

People Focus using LiQUiD organizing may have the potential of making an amazing splash.

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[2]"ITIL - pragmatic and simple": http://isene.com/itil.pdf

[3]"Processes, automation and human potential": http://isene.com/process.pdf