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## **CREATING EXTRAORDINARY ORGANIZATIONS**

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I am writing this letter for those innovators, explorers, and pioneers who want to move beyond the ordinary to the Extraordinary in creating business organizations.

### **CORE ORGANIZATION PROCESS – Provide, Maintain, and Develop the Capability of All Members**

*Welcome to letter 2-13. In the last letter, I examined the second of the four organizational core processes—Creating and maintaining an effective social system. In this letter, I am going to examine the next process and how the five core beliefs affect its design.*

#### ***Process Design Questions***

All results come ultimately from human capability and effort. Therefore, the process for building capability is essential. When designing this process, one must consider ways to answer questions such as:

- How do we identify necessary capabilities and the level of competence they require?
- How do we find prospective new members with necessary capabilities?
- How do we integrate new members into the organization?
- How do we enable individuals and groups to improve their capabilities?
- How do we enable individuals to contribute their capabilities fully and willingly?
- How do we enable everyone to pursue continuous learning of all kinds?

#### ***Design Objectives***

To answer these questions we need to produce a design within which members can reach certain objectives. Concerning capability we can best look at them in three categories.

##### **Enrolling**

The first category of objectives relates to finding, accepting, and integrating new members who will bring needed capabilities into the organization. They must also be able to work within an extraordinary organization. Some of the objectives in this part of the process are:

1. Finding — members are finding by whatever means—recruiters, referrals, through members—qualified member prospects.
2. Enrolling — members are bringing new members into the organization. There are two objectives within this one:
  - 2.1. Accepting — those responsible are making timely and correct decisions to ask prospects to join.

2.2. Signing up — the process to formalize a new person’s status as a member is clear and functioning well.

3. Integrating —organization members are welcoming new members who are becoming full members quickly and effectively.

### **Developing**

It is not enough to enroll people with needed skills. Each person needs to continuously add new capabilities and upgrade current ones. Therefore, this process must enable members to do this by meeting objectives such as these.

1. Self-assessment— individuals know what they know, what they need to know, and what they would like to learn
2. Provide learning opportunities — those wanting to learn have access to the means to do so. These can be internal or external.
3. Share opportunities — when there are fewer opportunities than there are people wanting them, those involved are sharing them fairly and equitably.

### **Contributing**

It does no good to have capable members who will not or cannot contribute all their capability to the organization. There need to be processes to assure that everyone can and will contribute fully. Such processes must enable meeting objectives like these:

1. Assure willingness to contribute — individuals are contributing to the organization fully and eagerly.
2. Provide means to contribute —members have no difficulty in contributing. They are experiencing such conditions as being in the right position for them, knowing clearly what they need to do, and having resources to do it.

### ***Effect of Beliefs on Design***

As with the previous processes, the five core beliefs define the parameters within which one must design.

#### **Purpose — The purpose for creating a business is to fulfill the needs and aspirations of its members**

Developing and using capability are two of the most potent contributors to meeting needs and aspirations. To enable this to happen the design must:

- Allow each individual to determine which capabilities to develop.
- Make certain the individual has access to necessary resources.
- Ensure that learning is learner-driven.
- Ensure that opportunities are available to fulfill all types of personal needs and aspirations.

**Authority — An organization has no authority hierarchy.**

The primary impact of this belief is that there is no one to mandate “training” or learning requirements, provide learning opportunities, or judge individual or group capability. The design must assure:

- That no one attempts to control what or how another person learns.
- That each member has full responsibility for her own learning.
- Processes and resources for members to design, initiate, and maintain, and access learning opportunities.

**Equality — All members of the organization have equal rights and status.**

No process needs equality more than learning and developing. If we want everyone to develop capabilities, we have to give everyone an equal chance to do so. That means the design must:

- Assure that everyone has equal opportunity to engage in learning.
- Provide fair and equitable processes to distribute opportunities when there are not enough for everyone wanting them.
- Assure that there is equality in the way members carry the burden of learning in both time and cost.

**Freedom — All members of the organization are free to do what they want unless it infringes on the freedom of another.**

If we say that developing capability is a learner driven process, we must allow individuals and groups the freedom to do so. To provide and support freedom the design must:

- Enable members to find out about learning opportunities both within and outside the organization.
- Enable individuals or groups to design and participate in learning opportunities.
- Allow access to any learning opportunities no matter where they are.
- Value and provide time for learning.
- Make it safe to learn from mistakes.

**Ownership — Members of the organization are the de facto owners of the business.**

All results come from human effort and capability. Continuously developing capability is essential to organizing, and hence individual and group success. This applies to all stakeholders, but especially to the “owners” of the business. To insure the best outcomes the design must:

- Assure a proper balance between learning and performing in relation to both cost and time
- Include capability and developing capability as factors in determining how and where members will contribute.

**Conclusion**

These are but a few of the ways the core beliefs affect the process design. Together they will determine whether members will succeed or fail as an organization.

Even today’s organizations seem to understand the importance of a good process for developing people’s capability. There are more examples of organizations like Sudbury Valley School and Semco—for instance Granite Rock—that are assuring capability in ways closer to those of an EO. These ground breaking organizations continue to show that the designs I am suggesting are not just idealistic dreams.

## ***Until Next Time***

In this letter, I continued examining the effect of the five core beliefs on designing the four core processes. In the next letter I will look at the fourth process, “Organize Individuals into an Effective Human System”.

Be Well, and  
Be Extraordinary!

Don Yates  
Extraordinary Organizations

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