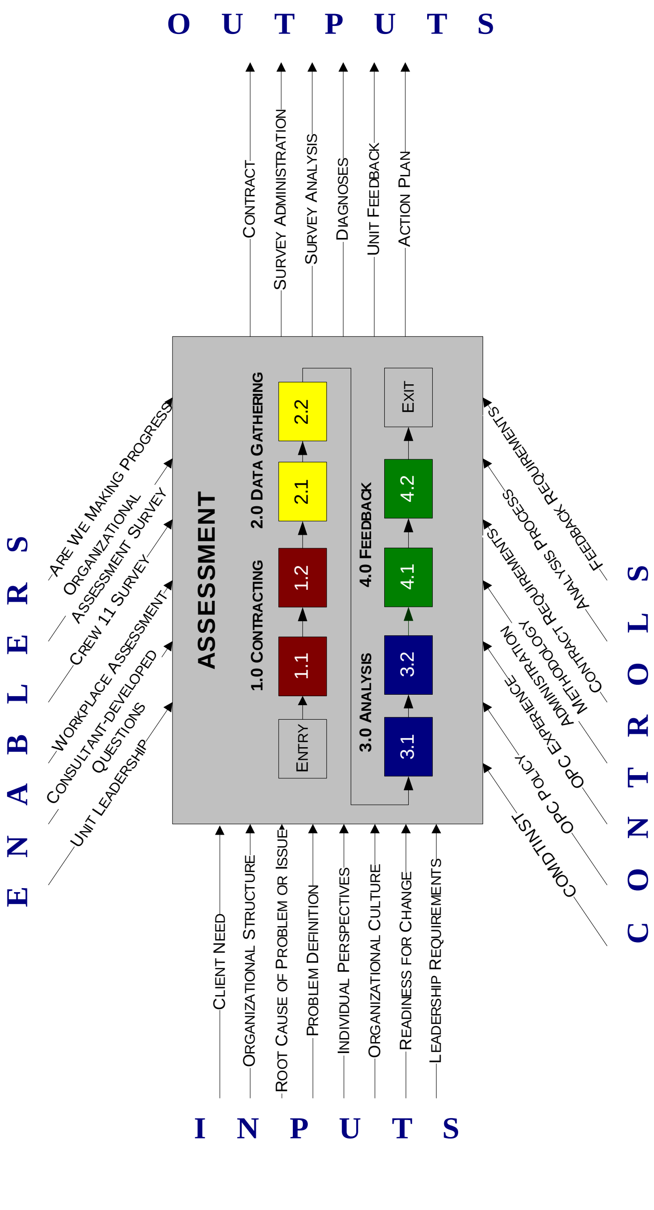
DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

Semper Paratus

Organizational Assessments

ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENTS

CONTEXT DIAGRAM



ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENTS
CHECKLIST

Contracting:

☐ Identify the Problem and Gain Commitment	☐ Identify the client and sponsors ☐ Learn about client's organization and establish creditability ☐ Learn about the problem – its cause and present state ☐ Assess the organization's readiness for change ☐ Develop a change consensus and commit to a methodology
☐ Align with the Client	☐ Address survey mechanics ☐ Ensure confidentiality ☐ Manage administrative details

Data Gathering:

☐ Prepare to Administer the Survey	☐ Set up the survey tool ☐ Verify arrangements
☐ Collect Data Using the Toolset	☐ In-brief with the organization's senior leader(s) ☐ Administer the assessment

Analysis:

☐ Perform Data Analysis	☐ Select an appropriate analysis tool ☐ Develop qualitative and quantitative data summaries
☐ Prepare Preliminary Diagnosis	☐ Choose the most relevant data to share with the client ☐ Make inferences based upon analysis summaries

Feedback:

☐ Provide Feedback to Key Stakeholders	☐ Prepare presentation and report summary ☐ Prepare for technical questions that may arise ☐ Plan introductory remarks ☐ Distribute copies of the feedback report ☐ Deliver feedback to stakeholder group
☐ Conduct Joint Action Planning	☐ Involve key stakeholders in the planning process ☐ Evaluate relevant data ☐ Agree on what is to be changed or improved ☐ Develop a change strategy ☐ Develop a change-process monitoring and management system ☐ Clarify Change Roles

ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENTS

DESCRIPTION: The process of collecting information to determine how an organization is functioning or to diagnose problems; assessment data is shared with the client to jointly determine the best improvement strategy.

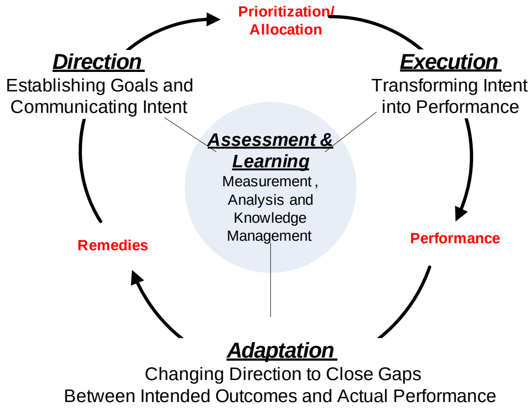
USE THIS TOOL: To determine employee satisfaction, leadership competency, climate quality, or root cause. Whatever the initial reason for contact, there are several standard assessments the OPC can use.

DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY: ***Beginner to Practitioner Level***

INTRODUCTION

Coast Guard units are in a continual cycle of change. Leaders: 1) establish goals and communicate intent, 2) transform intent into performance, and 3) change organizational direction to close gaps between intended outcomes and actual performance. The Coast Guard's Planning and Decision-Making Framework, shown below, illustrates the interrelationships and dependencies between these activities.

Whether they are developing strategy, planning operations, or administering routine management functions, leaders make their best decisions when they are provided insight through an effective measurement, analysis, and knowledge management process.



Assessments are one of the key tools that leaders and consultants use to measure and analyze performance. Their results can provide key knowledge about an organization's current situation and the insight to anticipate future problems. With this knowledge, leaders have the opportunity to prevent problems before they occur.

Additionally, Coast Guard commands often ask OPCs to conduct performance improvement interventions or to create change. These interventions are vitally dependent upon careful diagnosis. Assessments are the key tool used to collect the data upon which these diagnoses are made. Careful diagnosis can help leaders avoid the common mistakes during change efforts.

The impetus for an assessment takes one of two forms: 1) to assess a specific situation to discover root causes for a problem or 2) to assess an organization's environment to establish trends. This booklet establishes a standard assessment process that may be adapted to the evolving client need. The basic steps in the assessment process are:

Step 1.0 Contracting. Identifying the problem and aligning with the client.

Step 2.0 Data Gathering. Planning survey administration and collecting data using a number of data gathering instruments.

Step 3.0 Analysis. Performing data analysis and developing a preliminary diagnosis.

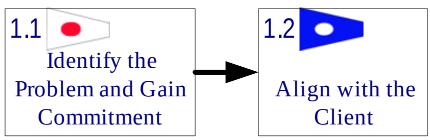
Step 4.0 Feedback. Providing feedback to key stakeholders and conducting joint action planning with the client organization.

PROCESS STEPS

1.0 CONTRACTING

The first step in the process is to establish a working relationship and a work plan with the client. This process follows the entering and contracting process normally used by Organization Development (OD) consultants. Each situation should be analyzed on its own merit through discussions with the unit representative prior to selecting an assessment tool. ALWAYS ask the unit representative: What is the desired outcome of the assessment? What does the unit want at the end of the process? A detailed task checklist and associated tools for the Contracting process are provided below.

DETAILED CHECKLIST		TOOLS
1.1	Identify the Problem and Gain Commitment • Identify the client and sponsors • Learn about client's organization and establish creditability • Learn about the problem – its cause and present state • Assess the organization's readiness for change • Develop a change consensus and commit to a methodology	Contracting Process
1.2	Align with the Client • Address survey mechanics • Insure confidentiality • Manage administrative details	Consulting Proposal



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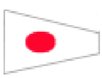
1.1 

IDENTIFY THE PROBLEM AND GAIN COMMITMENT

When discussing the assessment process with the unit point of contact or unit leadership, the consultant should focus on the following outcomes.

Refer to the ***Aligning with Our Clients Booklet*** for the Contracting Process

- Identify the client and sponsors.
- Learn about the client's organization and establish creditability.
- Learn about the problem– its cause and present state.
- Assess the organization's readiness for change.
- Develop a change consensus and commit to a methodology for assessing the organization.

If the organization requests a specific assessment, it is important to determine what they want to accomplish to ensure the tool they are asking for will deliver the desired results. The OPC should ensure that the client understands the intended use of the tool and what it will deliver prior to administering the assessment. Coast Guard standard assessment tools are listed in the table below.

1.2 ALIGN WITH THE CLIENT

The next step in the Contracting process is to work out the administration details. During the contracting phase, OPCs should determine:

ADDRESS SURVEY MECHANICS

- If the survey will be administered by paper or via the Internet. If paper, schedule an *all hands* to administer the survey. If Internet, schedule a window to provide access. In either case, ensure respondents understand the survey's purpose and the non-attributional nature of the process.
- How to sort the data at the end of the process. This will determine the demographic questions used in the survey.
- If interviews or focus groups will be conducted. If focus groups, work with the client to determine group makeup. If interviews, the client must provide a current personnel listing, including demographic information, to facilitate stratification.
- The out-brief and final report format.

Coast Guard Assessment Tools

ISSUE/AREA	TOOL
GENERAL EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION	▪ Workplace Assessment (See Assessments Toolset) ▪ Organizational Assessment Survey (OAS) *http://www.paassessor.org/report/*
LEADERSHIP	▪ Crew Survey (See Assessments Toolset) ▪ Organizational Assessment Survey (OAS) Unit Leadership Development Program (ULDP) *http://learning.uscg.mil/uldp/*
OVERALL UNIT QUALITY CLIMATE	▪ Are We Making Progress? *http://www.quality.nist.gov/Progress.htm*

INSURE CONFIDENTIALITY

- Ensure the client understands the OPC will not disclose assessment results without expressed approval.

Avoid Shoal Waters: DO NOT ALLOW any focus groups to include supervisors and their direct reports at any level.

- Ensure the client understands no demographic will be reported unless there are at least three to eight respondents within a demographic.
- Inform the client that confidentiality will be maintained. The client will have access to common themes, but no individual responses will be reported.
- Never give the out-brief at an *all hands* or group event. It should be conducted with the senior leaders only. Frequently, issues are uncovered that should be kept at the highest level.

MANAGE ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Once a tool is agreed on, it is important to discuss how to administer the assessment, including:

Preparation Equals Performance: A good assess-ment plan is key to a smooth experience for the client and quality data for the consultant.

- **Logistics.** Determine the best time frame to administer the assessment. If paper-based, allow at least one day away from the organization to analyze the data before the out-brief. If Internet, allow one to two weeks to gather data, with a reminder halfway through the time period.
- **Facility.** Each simultaneously conducted focus group will require a separate training room. Each simultaneously conducted interview will require a private office area.
- **Materials and Supplies.**
  - ✓ Copier, printer – for surveys
  - ✓ Projector (if needed for briefs)
  - ✓ Easels and chart pad for focus groups
  - ✓ Laptop for data collection

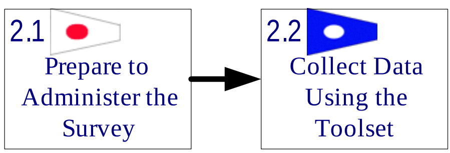
Refer to the Align with Our Clients Toolset (CD): ***Contracting Proposal***

Make sure the client agrees on the process in order to prevent scope creep. Once agreed, send an e-mail to the client outlining the agreed-upon process to verify and document alignment.

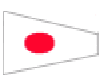
2.0 DATA GATHERING

The assessment tool provides the template for data collection. A lot of information can be collected in a short amount of time, and much of this data can be analyzed later using simple statistical tools. However, even though the tools are simple, they require some advanced planning. A detailed task checklist for this process is provided below.

DETAILED CHECKLIST		TOOLS
2.1	Prepare to Administer the Survey • Set up the survey tool • Verify arrangements	
2.2	Collect Data Using the Toolset • In-brief with the organization's senior leader(s) • Administer the assessment	Focus Group Survey Structured Interview



Data Gathering

2.1 

PREPARE TO ADMINISTER THE SURVEY

Work with the unit point of contact to set up survey administration procedures, and then set up arrangements.

SET UP THE SURVEY TOOL

If Internet, contact the LDC to set up a Perseus survey. If paper, incorporate agreed-upon demographics and set up a means to capture the data.

VERIFY ARRANGEMENTS

- Two weeks prior to arrival, verify schedule
- Ensure adequate facilities are available
- Obtain a current personnel list if needed
- Verify meeting times and places

2.2 COLLECT DATA USING THE TOOLSET

Data collection is normally done on-site. Use the following process to introduce the assessment process and begin administering the data collection effort:

IN-BRIEF WITH THE ORGANIZATION'S SENIOR LEADER(S)

This is a good time to *break the ice* with the organization's senior leader(s) if your point of contact was someone else. If this is your first contact ask, "What do you expect me to find?"

Avoiding Shoal Waters:

Remind the client NOT TO ALLOW any focus groups to include supervisors and their direct reports at any level.

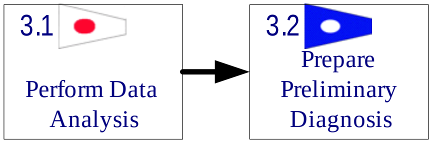
ADMINISTER THE ASSESSMENT

- If this is an electronically administered survey, include the data results in the in-brief. If paper, conduct an *all hands* to administer the survey.
- Reinforce respondent confidentiality! Ensure respondents deliver their completed surveys directly to an OPC. Do not allow someone within the command to handle surveys after they have been completed.
- Conduct Focus Groups/Interviews. If electronically administered, questions should focus on results from data collected in the survey. If paper based, use the attached generic questions for Focus Groups/ Interviews.

3.0 ANALYSIS

Once the data is collected, it must be interpreted through analysis. A detailed task checklist and associated tools are provided below.

DETAILED CHECKLIST		TOOLS
3.1	Perform Data Analysis • Select an appropriate analysis tool • Develop qualitative and quantitative data summaries	Content Analysis Force Field Analysis Statistical Methods
3.2	Prepare Preliminary Diagnosis • Choose the most relevant data to share with the client • Make inferences based upon analysis summaries	Reports and Presentations

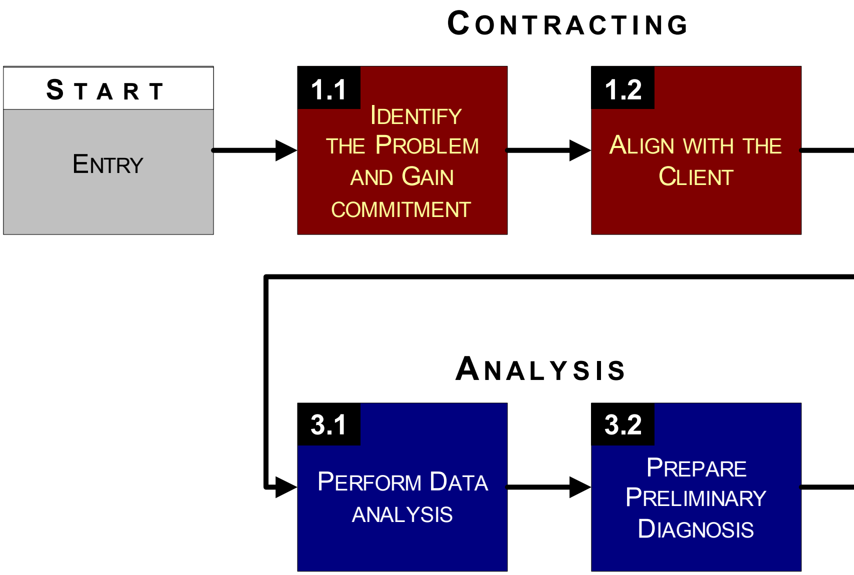


Analysis

Common Data Gathering Tools

INSTRUMENT	WHEN TO USE
QUESTIONNAIRES OR SURVEYS	To collect data efficiently from a large number of people and to quantitatively compare and evaluate the results. Results are easily fed back to the client.
INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS	Permits the interviewer to ask direct questions and further probe for clarification. Invaluable for gaining private views and feelings and for exploring new issues that emerge during the interview. May be structured or unstructured (broad).
FOCUS GROUPS	Unstructured meetings of 10 to 15 people; either a cross-section of the organization or functional area or a homogeneous group. Start with general questions, then probe answers more fully. Saves time and allows people to build off one another's ideas. However, group settings may inhibit some people's responses.
OBSERVATIONS	Casually walking through work areas and looking around or counting occurrences of specific kinds of behavior. Consultant may either be part of the group or detached. May use videotape or other recording methods.
UNOBTRUSIVE MEASURES	Typically obtained from organization records and include absenteeism or tardiness, grievances, quantity and quality of service, operational performance and readiness, meeting minutes, and correspondence with peer organizations or customers; an organizational chart, process flowcharts.

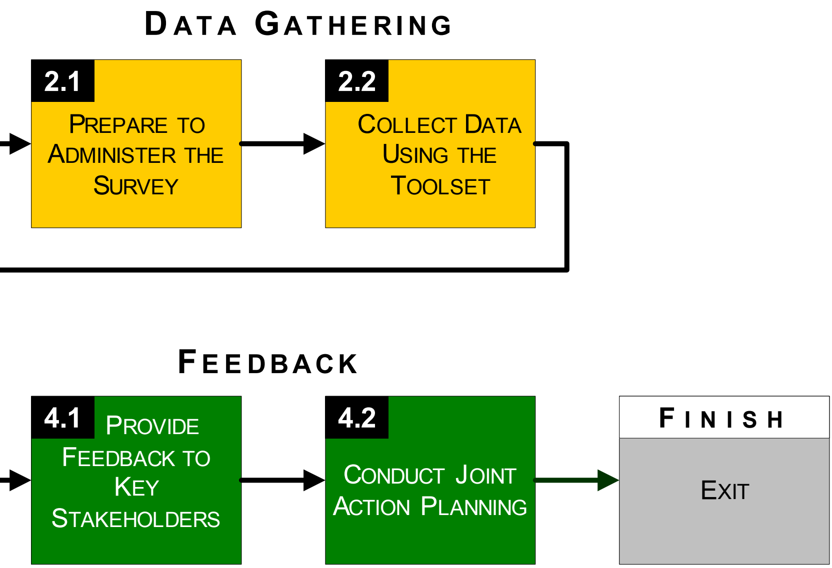
OPC Standard Assess



The Most Commonly Used Data G

Data Gathering Methods	**Analysis Tools**
Questionnaires or Surveys	Content Analysis – Iden
Individual Interviews	Force Field Analysis – A
Focus Groups	Means, Standard Devia
Observations	Scatter Diagrams and C
Unobtrusive Measures	Difference Tests – Com

ment Process and Toolset



athering Methods & Analysis Tools

tifying common themes

Analysis of proponent forces versus resistive forces

tions, Frequency Distributions – Economical and straightforward ways to describe data

orrelative Coefficients – Describe data in a way that permits one to make inferences about the relationships between variables

paring sample against a standard or norm

3.1

PERFORM DATA ANALYSIS

Perform data analysis using either qualitative or quantitative methods. Qualitative methods are easier and do not require special software to analyze numerical data. This also makes the results easier to understand and interpret. Quantitative methods, however, can provide more accurate readings of organizational problems and correlative analysis of root causes. OPCs must select an appropriate analysis tool.

Refer to the CG PIG: ***Force Field Analysis***

- Analyze interviews and focus group data using qualitative analysis methods such as content analysis or force field analysis for data.

- Surveys should be analyzed using quantitative methods and should employ software programs such as SPSS, Perseus, Minitab, or Excel. These programs can assist with displaying results graphically.

- Develop qualitative and quantitative summaries of the data in a report or a PowerPoint presentation.

3.2

PREPARE PRELIMINARY DIAGNOSIS

In preparing the diagnosis, OPC must be careful to:

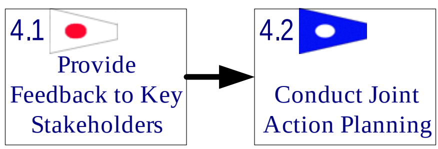
- Choose the most relevant data to share with the client. During data collection, a large amount of data is produced. There is often more information than the client needs or can realistically interpret. OPCs must summarize the data to make it easy to understand and the most useful in planning next steps.

- Make inferences based upon analysis summaries. OPCs must be careful not to inject bias into the summary. They should use their experience to *see into* the data, without pre-judging root causes. Root cause analysis is best done with the client.

4.0 FEEDBACK

OPCs should never provide data analyses to a command without sufficient explanation of what the data means. OPCs should present assessment findings in person to the command and its key stakeholders, if appropriate. A detailed task checklist and associated tools are provided below.

DETAILED CHECKLIST		TOOLS
4.1	Provide Feedback to Key Stakeholders • Prepare presentation and report summary • Prepare for technical questions that may arise • Plan introductory remarks • Distribute copies of the feedback report • Deliver feedback to stakeholder group	Presentation Tools
4.2	Conduct Joint Action Planning • Involve key stakeholders in the planning process • Evaluate relevant data • Agree on what is to be changed or improved • Develop a change strategy • Develop a change-process monitoring and management system • Clarify change roles	Action Plans



Feedback

Commonly Used Analysis Tools

TOOL	WHEN TO USE
CONTENT ANALYSIS	Identifying common themes
FORCE FIELD ANALYSIS	Analysis of proponent forces versus resistive forces
MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTIONS	Economical and straightforward ways to describe data
SCATTER DIAGRAMS AND CORRELATIVE COEFFICIENTS	Describes data in a way that permits one to make inferences about the relationships between variables
DIFFERENCE TESTS	Compares a sample against a standard or norm

4.1 PROVIDE FEEDBACK TO KEY STAKEHOLDERS

The feedback process consists of planning a presentation with the appropriate analysis and delivering it to the command. Feedback planning should prepare the consultant to deliver both *good* and *bad* news professionally. Steps include:

1. Prepare presentation and report summary;
2. Prepare for technical questions that may arise;
3. Plan introductory remarks;
4. Distribute copies of the feedback report;
5. Deliver feedback to a key stakeholder group.

FEEDBACK CONSIDERATIONS

When delivering feedback, the OPC should consider the following.

Trick of the Trade: The amount of data produced by surveys is often overwhelming; simplify and prioritize the report.

1. Feedback usually begins at the top with the organizational leaders.
2. Cascade feedback downward to groups reporting to managers and successively lower levels.
3. Feedback meetings should provide an opportunity to work with data; e.g., interpret data, diagnose problems, and develop action plans.

SUGGESTED FORMAT FOR SURVEYS

Trick of the Trade: Representative (sanitized) quotes add a touch of realism to the report.

1. Discuss methodology: Who, how, when, how many.
2. Set expectations – leaders should not expect a single assessment to give them all the insight they need.
3. Report the top three to five survey items or identified strengths.
4. Report the bottom three to five survey items or identified opportunities for improvement.
5. Show specific charts and graphs that support significant findings.
6. Summarize preliminary diagnosis, trends, and indications of problems.

SUGGESTED FORMAT FOR INTERVIEWS/FOCUS GROUPS

1. Discuss methodology: who, how, when, how many.
2. Set expectations – focus more on the opportunities.
3. Share common themes.
4. Illustrate with sanitized representative quotes.
5. Summarize diagnosis, trends, and problems.

4.2 CONDUCT JOINT ACTION PLANNING

Action planning is the process of developing strategies and tactics to manage the change or improvement from the present state to the desired future state. Action planning is performed with the client after the feedback process is completed. Feedback and action planning are often accomplished together in a single workshop.

According to Rothwell, Sullivan, and McLean in *Practicing Organizational Development: A Guide for Consultants*, the steps in the Action Planning are:

1. Involve Key Stakeholders in the Planning Process.

- Who can influence change planning, implementation, or management?
- Who is the change agent?
- Who might be on the change team?

2. Evaluate Relevant Data.

- Evaluate problems and their root causes.
- Assess organizational constraints, realities, and readiness for change.

3. Agree on What is to be Changed or Improved.

- Identify the unit of analysis (e.g., unit, department, or work team).
- Consider the desired extent of the change.
- Consider organization-wide change implications; explore ways to improve alignment.
- Reach an agreement on the change effort: who, what, to what extent, and change goals.

Tool of Choice:

The Force Field Analysis can help you to work out how to improve a change project's probability of success.

4. **Develop a Change Strategy.**
   - Identify forces against and for the change.
   - Explore intervention options.
   - Develop an action plan.

5. **Develop a Change-Process Monitoring and Management System.**
   - Usually, simple periodic feedback mechanisms will suffice.
   - Develop measures to verify desired results.

6. **Clarify Change Roles.**

   Who is responsible for what (e.g., change leaders, change agents, change team)?

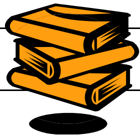
Providing Relevant Feedback

Feedback Should Be	Properties
Descriptive	Provide recent examples for clarification when possible. Use sanitized representative quotes from the interviews or questionnaires.
Verifiable	Support the information with other sources. Report corroborated information, not one-ofs.
Limited	Deliver small amounts of information when the potential emotional impact is great.
Significant	Feedback should be limited to those problems that the client can do something about or that create organizational energy for change.
Comparative	Whenever possible, use data that can be compared against a benchmark to give the organization an idea of where they fit.
Unfinalized	Deliver information that will stimulate action and provoke further diagnosis and problem solving.

USEFUL TOOLS

The following tools – templates, forms, worksheets, calculators, slide decks, facilitator notes, etc. – are included in the following references or on the accompanying compact disc .

Tool	Reference
Consulting Proposal	Aligning with Our Clients Toolset
Crew Survey	Assessments Toolset
Workplace Assessment Survey	Assessments Toolset
Generic Interview Questions	Assessments Toolset
Sample Assessment Schedule	Assessments Toolset
Structured Interview Diagnostic	Assessments Toolset
Force Field Analysis	CG PIG



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TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Effective change depends on a careful diagnosis of organization functioning, which can help managers avoid common mistakes.

Analysis: The process of organizing and examining data/information to make clear the underlying causes of an organizational problem or to identify areas for future development.

Assessment: The process of collecting information to determine how the organization is functioning or to diagnose problems; assessment data is to be shared with the client to jointly determining the best strategy for change or actions to improve performance.

CG Planning and Decision-Making Framework: The Coast Guard's version of the PDSA cycle. Illustrates the relationship between planning, execution, and decision-making and their dependence on assessment and learning. Helps organizations align their planning, measurement, and decision-making systems with those of their parent.

Contract: A formal or informal agreement between a consultant and the client organization to perform certain work. The contract typically identifies roles, expectations, resources, and other information required to successfully carry out the consultation process.

Diagnosis: The process of collecting information about a client system and working collaboratively with it to understand the system's current functioning. Effective diagnosis provides the systematic knowledge of the organization needed to design appropriate interventions.

Entry: The process that describes how a consultant first encounters and establishes a relationship with a client.

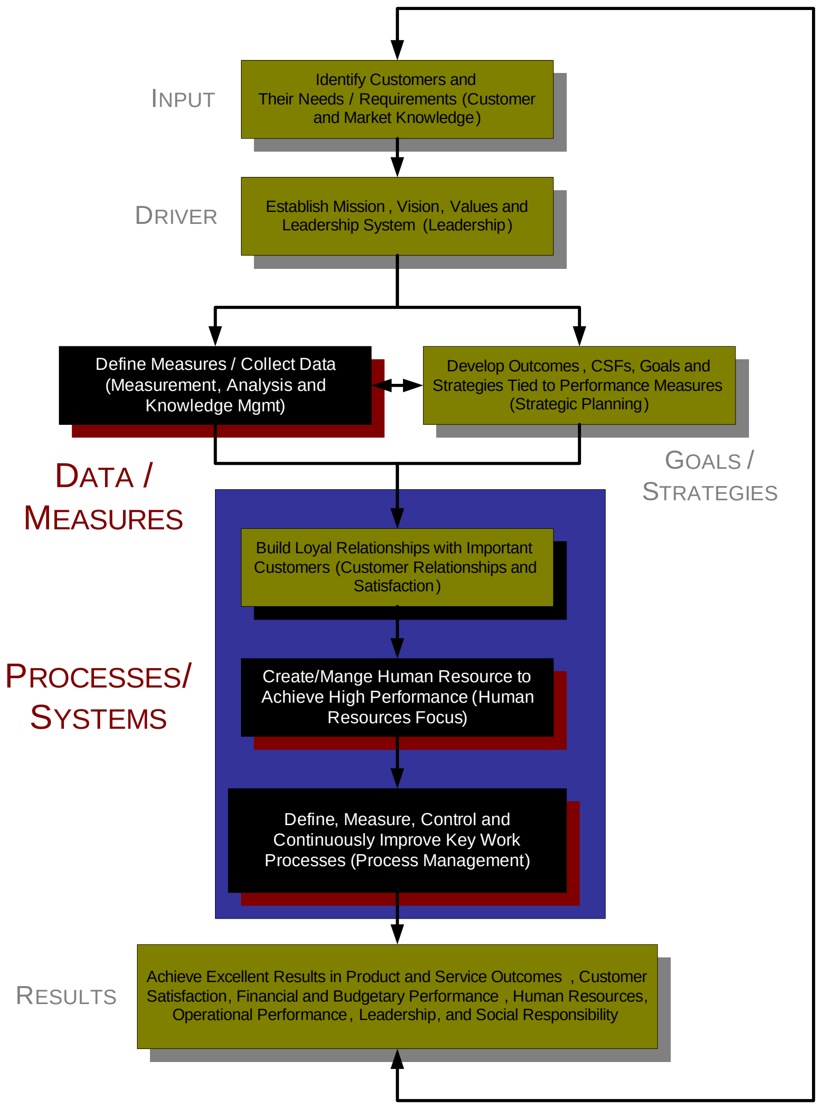
Exit: The process of withdrawing the consultants' energy, attention, and resources, ending the intervention in such a way that the client will call again.

Feedback: Information reported to the client regarding actual system-activity performance or results. Usually occurs after a period of observation or as a result of analysis of data gathered from surveys, interviews, or focus groups.

Gaining Commitment: Preparing an intervention plan with direct participation of affected stakeholders so that they share in its ownership. This creates an impetus for change and the support required to make it achievable.

NOTES

BALDRIGE LINK



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