PLANNING FOR ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE:

AN INFORMAL TOOL KIT FOR MANAGERS

A Report Prepared for MRDM/TD

by Jim Brady

March 8, 1991
Revised April 14, 1991

Note:

MRDM/TD was formerly PM/TD
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Report Overview</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outline of Planning Kit Contents</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning Change: Basic Management Tasks</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The &quot;SWOTsUP&quot; Analysis: Basis for Planning</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessing Org. Performance: A Sample Checklist</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimating Stakeholder Support: A Worksheet</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating Effective Work Teams</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active Listening: A Critical Management Skill</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Checklist for Improved Listening</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Steps in Problem Solving</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Analysis Sheet</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using Brainstorming to Improve Your Options</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Planning Worksheets</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed Staff Work: Old Tool for Today's Needs</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Books on Management and Innovation</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Appendix A</strong>: Sample of Staff Survey Questionnaire</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REPORT OVERVIEW  Page One

This is the second of two reports prepared for PM/TD on organizational change. The first report discussed Strategic Management factors which significantly affect the climate for staff creativity and innovation. The present report focuses on techniques and formats for planning specific organizational improvements. It is designed to be an informal self-help kit for A.I.D. managers concerned with making changes in their organizational structures, programs, procedures, etc.

The material presented herein reflects: (1) my involvement in initial activities to create the new Asia and Private Enterprise [APRE] Bureau in A.I.D., (2) current literature on organizational innovation, and (3) my organizational change experiences with A.I.D. and other institutions over the past three decades. During my work with APRE in late 1990, I was impressed with the positive and open-minded approach to organizational issues which was taken by Mrs. Henrietta Holsman Fore and her management team. I hope that this high level of commitment and cooperation on organizational change will continue, so that other A.I.D. managers faced with similar issues will have positive Agency-specific experiences on which to draw. After APRE had its organizational changes underway, a broader Agency revamping was announced. Consequently, it was agreed that materials I developed during the APRE experience should be broadened and expanded so that they might have wider application within A.I.D.

"Organizational change" can refer to either planned or unplanned change and it can have a negative or positive impact. This report focuses on planned organizational change or innovation. Innovation is the deliberate introduction of new and better ways of doing the organization’s business. It may result from the cumulative efforts of many small improvement efforts, as well as from major innovation projects. Innovation results when creative ideas from people are acted upon to produce results. The development and use of innovation or project teams are important for linking staff into the innovation process. The teams should include people with different approaches to problems, so as to generate a wider range of ideas from which to draw in planning innovation. Similarly, the leaders and members of teams need to use problem solving and decision making techniques which make the best use of an individual’s creative potential. These include such approaches as "brainstorming"—which separates the idea generation phase of problem solving from the idea evaluation phase to generate more action options. This kit includes information and worksheets which will hopefully be useful to the manager in these areas.
It is recognized that many managers are so busy coping with current routines and daily crises that they may have little time to plan innovations. However, organizations which rely on reactive or fire-fighting strategies may quickly become obsolete if their operating environments are rapidly changing. Therefore, it is assumed that a critical task of A.I.D. managers today is to maintain a proper balance between: (1) internal organizational competencies and (2) the changing demands being made on the organization by external forces (including key clients and other stakeholders). Maintaining this balance requires A.I.D. managers to continuously pursue improvement and innovation, not only in programs but also in organizational systems (strategies, structures, leadership styles, values, etc.) and in human resources development. In short, A.I.D. needs a critical mass of proactive managers who treat organizational change not as a unique or special event, but as a regular organizational process requiring the application of learnable skills.

To create innovative organizations, managers must use personal leadership styles and skills which help their people to understand and commit themselves to the unending pursuit of quality and innovation. Several management studies indicate that staff are more likely to support new schemes if they are allowed to participate in decisions which affect them. This suggests that democratic or participatory leadership styles are more appropriate in promoting organizational innovation. Such styles require managers to share decision making authority with staff. In doing this, a manager also needs to define for subordinates the unit’s authority limits in any given situation, so that they understand which factors they can and cannot influence.

In situations where there are high staff stress levels associated with organizational change, managers can increase communication flows to reduce uncertainty and confusion. Managers should keep communications honest and not try to cover up unpleasant factors which may be associated with a change (e.g., staff reductions or transfers). They should be very visible and available to staff during periods of organizational uncertainty. Where there are legal or contractual restrictions on what information the manager can share with subordinates about pending changes, these restrictions need to be clarified early in the process. Finally, managers and their staffs should make maximum use of the inhouse training that is available in several of the areas discussed herein.
PLANNING FOR ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE:
AN INFORMAL TOOLKIT FOR MANAGERS

Outline of Contents

This collection of information sheets and worksheets was prepared as part of HRDM/TD's effort to assist interested A.I.D. managers in planning organizational improvements. The kit contains the following items:

(1) A brief description of the basic management tasks involved in planning an organizational change.

(2) Information and worksheet for analyzing (a) organizational Strengths and Weaknesses and (b) external Opportunities and Threats underlying Planning decisions. This "SWOTS UP" assessment is to help the manager identify gaps between current organizational capacities and the demands being made on the organization. The results of this assessment can be used in preparing the manager's personal Action Agenda. (A sample staff survey questionnaire is appended to the kit for reference since such instruments may be used to systematically collect information on staff perceptions of internal conditions and external trends.)

(3) A sample Organizational Performance Checklist to help managers evaluate their organization's progress and identify improvement needs.

(4) Information and worksheets on (a) creating effective work teams, (b) improving listening skills, (c) problem solving and goal setting, and (d) using "brainstorming" to generate more creative action options.

(5) Project Planning Sheets to help the manager move from the problem solving and goal setting process to specific steps for planning organizational improvements and innovations.

(6) Information on Completed Staff Work (which may be useful in preparing transmittal or action memos on project proposals).

(7) A list of books on management and innovation.

The kit focuses on areas that HRDM/TD's cooperative efforts with A.I.D. units indicate are important in pursuing organizational effectiveness. However, the kit is not intended to substitute for the practical insights and experience of managers and their staffs. Moreover, many of the ideas herein will be familiar to staff who have worked on development projects in our cooperating countries. However, the target of change and improvement in this case is not host country counterparts but the A.I.D. staff itself. It is often easier to give others advice on change than to implement it at home?

We suggest that you skim each item in the kit and become familiar with what is here, before you begin working on any particular item.

We would welcome your suggestions for improving this kit. Pass them on to Robert R. Leon de Vivero, Toni Mitchell, or Jim Brady in HRDM/TD, Room 307, SA 2 (ZIP4+0206).

*****
PLANNING ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE: SOME BASIC MANAGEMENT TASKS

I. TREATING INNOVATION AS A CONTINUING MANAGEMENT TASK

Research suggests that the organizations which remain healthy over time continuously innovate and improve their programs and management systems. They keep organizational skills honed to anticipate and address changing external conditions (including the changing needs of organizational stakeholders: clients, financiers, suppliers, etc.). Effective managers thus treat their organizations as systems of interrelated and interdependent components which must be well coordinated (led) to achieve program and other goals on time. In order to obtain needed resources, the organization must demonstrate that its programs are having a positive and significant impact on clients and other key external groups. In the A.I.D. situation, reaching the appropriate level of innovation may require more managers to shift their focus from inputs and internal activities to outputs and external impact. "Outputs" are the services, information, advice, funds, etc. which the organization produces for the outside world. To stay effective over the longer term, the manager must not only pursue program improvements, but also try to increase organizational competencies and staff skills and motivation. The organization's people are its most critical resource for innovation. Among other things they are the source of the creative ideas which lead to innovation. The following sections discuss some tasks managers must perform in identifying improvement needs, creating an action agenda, and planning specific improvement projects.

II. ASSESSING NEEDS AND SETTING IMPROVEMENT GOALS

Figure 1 provides an overview of the improvement planning process. In the first phase of planning, the manager develops and uses the best available data bases to analyze current external and internal conditions. This includes an assessment of the relationship between any new mandates for change and ongoing programs. The manager, in collaboration with staff and others, must decide whether current efforts are adequate or need to be modified or augmented to address changing conditions. The needs analysis phase should identify potential improvement areas which can then be subjected to more specific analyses in the problem solving and goal setting phase. The manager must ensure that the set of program and other goals which result are sufficiently specific to be understood by those who must implement them. This may require the establishment of a hierarchy of goals and objectives ranging from the broad general vision statements at the top down to specific targets in the annual work plans of work teams and individual staff members. Without such definite guidelines and plans, it will be difficult to hold anyone responsible for developing and implementing improvements and innovations.

III. DEFINING THE MANAGER'S ACTION AGENDA

After assessing conditions and trends, the manager needs to develop his/her personal Action Agenda to cover the key improvements to be pursued during the coming months and years. This Agenda includes both formal and informal objectives. Some "informal" objectives may initially be only general ideas in the manager's mind. Over time some of these will be dropped while others will become firmer and moved onto the "formal" agenda. To free up resources for new projects, the Agenda may include actions to terminate current low-yield efforts. Implementing some Agenda items requires that they be linked to other A.I.D. programming and resource acquisition processes (CDSS, evaluation plans, personnel actions, etc.).
FIGURE 1

PLANNING ORGANIZATIONAL INNOVATION PROJECTS

ASSESSING NEEDS
AND DEFINING GOALS
Need to improve:
(a) Programs
(b) Org. Strengths
(c) Staff skills
Mandates from above.

MANAGER'S AGENDA
(formal/informal)
Innovation Goals
Resource acquisition
Cooperation Network
Implementing Tactics
Feedback Schemes

DATA BASES
Prog. Eval. Reports
Staff Surveys
Mgt. Info. Systems
Informal feedback
"SWOTsUP" Analysis

ANNUAL PLANS/BUDGETS
Office Action Plan
Innovation Projects
Staff Dev. Plan
Org. Improve. Plan
Monitoring & Eval.

PROJECT DESIGN
AND EXECUTION
Organize Teams
Train Teams
Set Goals
Get Resources
Sustain action

RESEARCH AND
DATA COLLECTION
CDIE data
State of the Arts
(info. by field)

INFORMATION FEEDBACK

PM/TD: Jim Brady 3/8/91  POCFLOW.WRI
The manager’s Action Agenda will always be evolving to reflect changing conditions and it will normally encompass plans and projects in various stages of design or execution.

IV. NETWORKING TO OBTAIN SUPPORT FOR THE AGENDA

Once the manager’s Action Agenda is defined, he/she needs to get support for the agenda from key actors (e.g., superiors, implementing staff, clients, and colleagues). This includes recruiting senior managers to be "sponsors" for key innovation projects. If important groups waiver on providing support, the manager may need to get them more involved and then hopefully committed to the particular enterprises. When organizing Work/Project Teams, the manager should consider including someone from all key offices and then working to ensure that they participate positively in meetings (and support the project within their home offices). At all stages of the improvement planning process, the manager needs to practice the types of communication skills which elicit support from staff, peers, and other stakeholders. This includes being an active listener, to obtain accurate and honest feedback from people. (See information sheets on "Active Listening" and "Using Brainstorming Techniques".) When properly used, Brainstorming can help people to keep an open mind when examining problems and generating improvement options. The manager may also need to strengthen the unit’s systems for “networking” and maintaining regular contacts with internal and external groups whose support is critical to implementing the Action Agenda.

V. PLANNING INNOVATION OR IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

At this point, the manager should have defined his/her priority innovation goals and prepared or updated an Action Agenda. The manager then needs to decide how many projects to pursue and start the project planning process. The organizing and planning tasks for each innovation or improvement project might include the following:

1. Organizing project or work teams to concentrate on specific areas of innovation or improvement (e.g., programs, processes, policies, staff development). The Problem Analysis Sheet and related sheet on "Steps in Problem Solving" can be used by a team to narrow down alternatives for planning specific improvements. The team leader or facilitator can use brainstorming or similar techniques to help the group generate several creative action options. (See information sheet on Brainstorming.)

2. Once specific improvement objectives are defined and understood by all team members, the team can use the Project Planning Worksheets to produce a more detailed action proposal. The team can also periodically refer to the information sheets on Work Teams and Active Listening to see if its own procedures and operations can be improved.

3. After the Project Planning Worksheets or other planning documents are completed, the manager needs to choose strategies for getting project concurrences and approvals. The information sheets on Completed Staff Work may be useful for preparing the transmittal or decision documents needed to obtain organizational clearances and approvals.

*****
THE "SWOTsUP" ANALYSIS: A BASIS FOR PLANNING

"SWOTs UP" is an acronym for [Organizational] Strengths and Weaknesses and [External] Opportunities and Threats Underlying Planning. The manager conducts an analysis of these four areas and their interrelationships in order to decide where to focus the organization's efforts. The results should help the manager to develop an Action Agenda for maintaining the best match between the organization's competencies and the demands being made on it. One strategy is concentrate first on using organizational strengths to exploit external opportunities, while also addressing internal weaknesses and external threats. If the organization is operating in a rapidly changing environment, seeking a good match or fit between the two is like trying to hit a moving target. In such cases, organizational change is a constant and must be managed as such.

In conducting a situational analysis, the manager needs to estimate whether a given event or trend will have a negative or positive impact on the organization (i.e., be a Threat or an Opportunity). At the A.I.D. Office level, external Threats and Opportunities could include (a) intra-agency factors such as the "new program initiatives" (democracy, private enterprise, family-based programs, etc.) or the Agency-wide reorganization and (b) international factors and trends (e.g., the political upheaval in Eastern Europe, the advent of the EEC in 1992, the political turmoil in the Gulf, and the changing role of donors like Japan).

The SWOTsUP Worksheet (below) identifies some general factors which might included in a situational analysis. The manager can modify or augment the worksheet to make it more applicable to his/her particular unit and programs. In looking at Political or Policy Trends, for example, the manager would assess the congruence between (a) his/her unit's goals and competencies and (b) current Agency-wide goals and program priorities. If the unit has no programs or staff expertise for the promotion of, say, Democratic Initiatives, does this represent a Threat or an Opportunity for the unit (or is it not relevant)? If the manager decides it is important to have a new project or other form of participation in the "Democratic Initiative", this decision would be one of the analytical outputs. (This then becomes an input into development of the manager's Action Agenda and the Project Planning process--see separate worksheets on Problem Solving and "Project Planning"). Conversely, the manager may decide that his/her current staff and unit have outstanding Strengths in an area not covered in the Agency's new program initiatives. The manager may then decide that it is important to sell senior managers on the value of retaining such skills and programs by (1) incorporating these into one of the approved initiatives or (2) adding a new initiative which covers existing programs and skills. In short, the analysis should help the manager make decisions about ending, continuing, changing, or augmenting current programs and staff and initiating new programs (with existing and/or new staff).
Worksheet for Analysis of Strengths/Weakness and Opportunities/Threats Underlying Planning

**Instructions:** List key factors or trends in your operating environment and then circle a "T" or an "O" to indicate that the impact of this factor is likely to be negative (a Threat) or positive (an Opportunity). After completing the list, select the more important items for problem solving and goal setting discussions with your project/work teams.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I. External Factors:</th>
<th>Is this factor a Threat or an Opportunity?:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Political or Policy Trends:</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. ________________________________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. ________________________________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Economic/Financial Trends:</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. ________________________________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. ________________________________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Technological (ADP, communications, etc.):</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. ________________________________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. ________________________________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Our Competition (other donors, USG agencies, etc.):</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. ________________________________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. ________________________________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Other external trends or factors:</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. ________________________________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. ________________________________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>II. Internal Organizational Factors:</th>
<th>Is this a Strength or a Weakness?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Our current program mix &amp; reputation</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Current staff skills and expertise</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Management skills and reputation</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Effectiveness of networking (vital contacts inside and outside of A.I.D.)</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Other: ____________________________</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Other: ____________________________</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

File: WORD5 "SWOTSUP1" Jim Brady 3-8-91 & 4-14-91
SOME IDEAS AND TERMS

**Why Innovation?**: "Firms cannot be innovative without having managers capable of generating creative ideas. At the same time, managers cannot practice their creativity in organisations that stifle and constrain the creative process.... However, it is also important to remember that managers can have an impact upon the creative environment and vice versa.... Without creativity (internally generated or acquired) one cannot have innovation, and without innovation an organisation cannot be or remain successful."  

**Innovation**: The innovation process involves the ideas of invention, discovery, or creativity, but goes beyond these. Innovation "is anything that provides usable, unique novel solutions to problems, opportunities, or challenges--whether small or large." Innovation includes not only the big breakthroughs; many little changes and adaptations can also constitute significant innovation. Examples include a new product, new uses for an old product, a novel marketing strategy, new designs of man­machine systems to increase productivity, and so on.  
**Creativity**: The creative person has ideas and these are his or her output. The innovator translates ideas into realities. Action leading to tangible products or services is the output.  

**Quality Leadership**: "Quality Leadership emphasizes results by working on methods. Problems are solved, not just covered up. Dr. Deming tells us to give customer concerns top priority, to study and constantly improve every work process so that the final product or service exceeds customer expectations.... Quality Leadership, therefore, focuses on creating a workplace that encourages everyone to contribute to the company. Everyone in the company learns to use a scientific approach to solving problems and making improvements."  

YOU MAY KNOW WHERE YOU ARE GOING.  
GOD MAY KNOW WHERE YOU ARE GOING.  
DOES YOUR SECRETARY KNOW WHERE YOU ARE GOING?  

*Source: Sign on cubicle wall*
ASSESSING ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE:
A SAMPLE CHECKLIST

Jim Brady, PM/TO
Updated 3/8/91

I. PURPOSE

This sample checklist was compiled to help interested A.I.D. managers assess the general effectiveness of their organizational units. The organization is treated as an "open system" which processes Inputs (resources) to produce Outputs (services, products, advice, etc). The Outputs should relate to achievement of the organization's Goals. It is assumed that effectiveness should be measured by how well the organization benefits clients and others in the outside world, not by the efficiency of internal activities. This is an important point, since internal activities may consume considerable staff energy and other resources while contributing little to external impact. The checklist thus emphasizes the management tasks which must be performed to maintain the proper match between internal organizational competencies and the performance demands being made on the organization by key external parties. In pursuing this match, the manager might initially look for areas where the unit's Strengths can be used to exploit favorable external trends or Opportunities. (The separate information and worksheets on the "SWOTsUP" analysis provide more details on assessing organizational Strengths and Weaknesses in relation to current external Opportunities and Threats.)

Figure 1 shows some major components of an organizational system and Table 1 describes some Basic Management Tasks from a systems perspective. You can decide which elements apply to your organizational situation.

As you go through the checklist, try to identify (1) areas where you need to make improvements and (2) the "stakeholders" who will oppose or support each of the possible improvements. A "stakeholder" is any person or group inside or outside of the organization with a significant "stake" or interest in the success or failure of your organization. For example, your office employees are internal stakeholders, while your Assistant Administrator may be an external stakeholder. From an Agency-wide viewpoint, members of Congress are important external stakeholders since they influence funding levels and the manner in which funds are used.

As you use the Checklist, please add items that I have missed, but which are significant to your situation. The PM/TO staff and I would also appreciate your suggestions for improving the checklist.
Figure 1: Components of an Organizational System
(A.I.D. Office)

EXTERNAL (ENVIRONMENTAL) INFLUENCES:
[Domestic and International]

POLITICAL - LEGAL - ECONOMIC - CULTURAL - TECHNICAL - PHYSICAL

These external influences are often exerted through ORGANIZATIONS like the following:

- Other A.I.D. Offices
- Congress
- Other USG Agencies
- USAID Missions
- Interest Groups
- Other Donors
- Host Country Government
- Clients
- Contractors/Grantees

Others: __________________________________________

ORGANIZATIONAL SYSTEM

Internal Components and Operations
(Subsystems)

INPUTS OR ------> MANAGEMENT ------> OUTPUTS:
RESOURCES OR PRODUCTION
FUNCTIONS:

Ideas --> Setting Goals --> Services
Information --> Organizing --> Funding
Funds --> Leading --> Advice
People ----> Motivating ----> Training ----> GOAL
Equipment --> Communicating --> Equipment
Space --> Implementing --> Reports

Feedback Information on Performance

---->---->----> PASSAGE OF TIME ---->---->---->
Table 1 - BASIC SYSTEMS MANAGEMENT TASKS

1. SYSTEM DEFINITION: Define the boundaries of your organizational system and the major internal components. Then identify and assess current and projected external trends/organizations which can have a significant impact on your organization.

2. ORGANIZATIONAL FIT WITH ENVIRONMENT: Assess match or "fit" between (1) current organizational goals and capacities and (2) demands/needs of key external groups ("stakeholders"). Then revise organizational plans and goals as needed to address current and future needs.

3. MANAGER'S ACTION AGENDA: Establish your personal Action Agenda which defines the specific tasks and resources needed to achieve continuous improvements or innovations in (a) programs, (b) the organizational set-up, and (c) staff training and development.

4. SPECIFIC WORK PLANS: Using Manager's Agenda and other guidance, work with staff to (a) set medium and short term goals and (b) make annual work plans for each unit and individual. Plans at each level should include some specific quality improvement and innovation goals for (1) programs, (2) organizational development, and (3) staff development. Plans should include specific target dates for reaching progress benchmarks or milestones.

5. RESOURCE BUDGETS: Commit financial, human, and other resources needed for implementing plans.

6. PROGRESS MONITORING: Assign responsibility to specific units/persons for monitoring and reporting on (1) key external trends and key stakeholders or competitors and (2) progress of organization toward goals.

7. QUALITY IMPROVEMENT TEAMS: Create and empower teams at all levels to improve quality of services. Provide teams with training and facilitator services needed to organize and operate effectively.

8. LEADERSHIP: Review and improve leadership styles and behaviors of managers and supervisors so that these provide a climate which encourages staff creativity and innovation. Stress importance of managers' daily actions in increasing mutual trust and cooperation.

9. REWARD SYSTEMS: Link performance evaluation and reward systems to each unit's or person's progress on achieving improvements and innovations.

10. OPEN COMMUNICATION: Ensure that organizational communication flows are sufficiently fast, open, and accurate—to facilitate organizational learning and decision-making. As needed, create special modes to facilitate communication and action on improving operations (e.g., get independent feedback on organizational performance and impact).

11. REVIEW AND REVISION OF SYSTEM: Schedule regular reviews of internal progress/problems and external impact (meeting needs of clients, employees, and other organizational stakeholders). Always have disinterested parties as "devil's advocates" in important reviews (to keep discussions realistic and avoid excessive group conformity or "group-think"). Act on feedback and review information to make needed changes in goals, programs, or internal operations and staff.

*****
II. USING THE CHECKLIST

After each item below, indicate its Importance to your unit, by entering an H (high), M (medium), or L (low). Next, rate how effectively the item is now being addressed (Present Level of Effectiveness) on a scale of 1 (Lowest) to 10 (Highest). Finally, indicate the level of effectiveness the organization should try to achieve on this item during the next 6-12 months (Target Level of Effectiveness). The ratings can be used to help identify areas where (a) improvements are needed or (b) things are working well and may only need to be reinforced or expanded.

ORGANIZATIONAL PLANNING CHECKLIST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTION ITEMS</th>
<th>IMPORTANCE OF ITEM</th>
<th>EFFECTIVENESS:</th>
<th>PRESENT LEVEL</th>
<th>TARGET LEVEL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Hi-M-Low)</td>
<td>(1-10)</td>
<td>(1-10)</td>
<td>(1-10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. UNIT GOALS AND PLANS:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 A written statement of our goals and priorities has been given to all staff members and other key stakeholders.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Annual Office Work Plans have been approved which include improvements in programs, procedures, and organizational systems.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 A plan to get staff expertise for new efforts has been prepared and approved.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 A Staff Development Plan has been approved (to prepare current staff for new or changing tasks).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 Funds are available for implementing above actions.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ACTION ITEMS: What? When? Who?

1. 

2. 

3. 
### ORGANIZATIONAL PLANNING CHECKLIST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTION ITEMS</th>
<th>IMPORTANCE OF ITEM (Hi-M-Low)</th>
<th>EFFECTIVENESS: PRESENT LEVEL (1-10)</th>
<th>TARGET LEVEL (1-10)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. STRUCTURE AND STAFFING:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Clear formal/functional statement and organizational chart have been issued.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Special <strong>work teams</strong> are organized as needed to supplement the functional structure (e.g., to network with key stakeholders or implement innovations).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Inter-relationships and <strong>tasks</strong> of all work units and teams are clear.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 Current or planned <strong>mix of staff skills</strong> meets needs of new program initiatives.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 Schemes have been established to recognize staff service on special teams or tasks.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. IMPLEMENTING PROCEDURES:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Guidelines on resource allocation priorities issued (linking funds and staff to new priorities).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Financial management and control systems in place. (e.g. clear delegations of authority and procedures for committing funds.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 Clear programming procedures and documentation issued. (Or an action plan exists to update existing systems).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Program/OE Budgets reflect new priorities. (Some funds are provided for innovation and experimentation.).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### ORGANIZATIONAL PLANNING CHECKLIST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTION ITEMS</th>
<th>IMPORTANCE OF ITEM (Hi-M-Low)</th>
<th>EFFECTIVENESS: PRESENT LEVEL (1-10)</th>
<th>TARGET LEVEL (1-10)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**IMPLEMENTING PROCEDURES** (Continued):

3.5 Objective systems exist to regularly monitor progress on goals and provide feedback for review/corrective action.  

**LEADERSHIP TASKS AND STYLES:**

4.1 All managers have **action agendas** for implementing new goals and programs.

4.2 Managers' EER/PAR Work Plans include specific innovation and improvement tasks for programs **and org. systems**

4.3 **Teams** for quality improvement or innovation are **organized** and meeting regularly to implement action plans.

4.4 Action has been taken to provide managers and staff with needed **training** on team work and innovation/quality improvement (via classroom and/or on-the-job training).

4.5 Managers' current leadership **styles** fit new operational requirements. (They practice supervisory behaviors needed to evoke staff innovation.)

4.6 Systems exist to provide non-management/support staff with tangible and intangible **rewards** for improvements.

---

**ACTION ITEMS:**  

1. **What?**  

2.  

3.  

**When?**  

**Who?**
## ORGANIZATIONAL PLANNING CHECKLIST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTION ITEMS</th>
<th>IMPORTANCE OF ITEM (Hi-M-Low)</th>
<th>EFFECTIVENESS: PRESENT LEVEL (1-10)</th>
<th>TARGET LEVEL (1-10)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. UNIT COMPETENCY AND IMPACT:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Managers continuously improve their innovation skills and performance (via training, observations of other organizations, etc.).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2 Managers behave consistently in ways which demonstrate a commitment to high quality and continuous improvement of programs and procedures.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3 The unit maintains effective contacts with key supporters or stakeholders (e.g., other AID units, other agencies, contractors, and clients).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4 The unit systematically monitors key external factors (political/economic trends, state-of-the-art developments, program impact on clients, and actions of its competitors).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5 Managers use feedback on internal operations and external impact to improve systems and operations and/or revise goals and priorities.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### ACTION ITEMS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What?</th>
<th>When?</th>
<th>Who?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FILE:** MSWORD5: "OFFCL391"  Jim Brady Revised 3-8-91
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholders</th>
<th>Major Assumptions</th>
<th>Assumption Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Superiors)</td>
<td>Supporting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Importance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Certainty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resisting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Peers)</td>
<td>Supporting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Importance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Certainty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resisting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Clients)</td>
<td>Supporting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Importance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Certainty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resisting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Use additional sheets as needed to cover key groups of stakeholders.)

CREATING EFFECTIVE WORK TEAMS

I. TEAM WORK AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

The management literature stresses the critical role of the organization's human resources in producing the level of innovation required to progress in today's rapidly changing world. While financial capital and technology may be important resources, their productive use depends upon the quality of the organization's human capital. However, to be properly developed and utilized, people must be effectively linked into organizational structures. This occurs primarily through their participation in one or more small work teams. Work teams are thus an important means of (1) facilitating the application of human talent to innovation opportunities and (2) providing employees with personal growth and work satisfaction. After surveying the use of teams in 51 U.S. companies, Glenn Parker concluded:

"...Productivity, quality, service, problem solving, innovation, and rapid response are some of the most significant benefits team players bring to a company. They are helping to develop and maintain the competitive edge. And dare we say it? Being part of an effective team is enjoyable. When asked to report on their most enjoyable work experiences, most people will mention a business team, task force, committee, or other successful team activity. Being an effective team player and working with other effective team players is a great source of personal satisfaction." *

However, effective team work does not come just by putting people together in a work situation. The manager must strive to: (1) get the right mix of skills and personalities on the teams, (2) secure team members' commitment to organizational goals, and (3) provide them a proper setting and structure in which to operate. Figure 2 lists some characteristics of effective teams. The manager and team members can use this list to assess current team performance and to select areas for improvement.

Managers need to understand the factors which produce effective team meetings. Basically, an effective work team is one which achieves organizational goals and meets the needs of team members. This means that there must be shared values and goals. Additionally, both the manager and the other members of his/her team need to understand and perform certain leadership or group facilitation roles to keep the team members working smoothly together to complete tasks.

1. Clear Purpose
   - The vision, mission, goal, or task of the team has been defined and is now accepted by everyone.
   - There is an action plan.

2. Informality
   - The climate tends to be informal, comfortable, and relaxed. There are no obvious tensions or signs of boredom.

3. Participation
   - There is much discussion and everyone is encouraged to participate.

4. Listening
   - The members use effective listening techniques such as questioning, paraphrasing, and summarizing to get out ideas.

5. Civilized Disagreement
   - There is disagreement, but the team is comfortable with this and shows no signs of avoiding, smoothing over, or suppressing conflict.

6. Consensus Decisions
   - For important decisions, the goal is substantial but not necessarily unanimous agreement through open discussion of everyone's ideas, avoidance of formal voting, or easy compromises.

7. Open Communication
   - Team members feel free to express their feelings on the tasks as well as on the group's operation.
   - There are few hidden agendas. Communication takes place outside of meetings.

8. Clear Roles and Work Assignments
   - There are clear expectations about the roles played by each team member. When action is taken, clear assignments are made, accepted, and carried out.
   - Work is fairly distributed among team members.

9. Shared Leadership
   - While the team has a formal leader, leadership functions shift from time to time depending upon the circumstances, the needs of the group, and the skills of the members. The formal leader models the appropriate behavior and helps establish positive norms.

10. External Relations
    - The team spends time developing key outside relationships, mobilizing resources, and building credibility with important players in other parts of the organization.

11. Style Diversity
    - The team has a broad spectrum of team-player types including members who emphasize attention to task, goal setting, focus on process, and questions about how the team is functioning.

12. Self-Assessment
    - Periodically, the team stops to examine how well it is functioning and what may be interfering with its effectiveness.

II. SHARING TEAM LEADERSHIP ROLES

The manager may be the formal leader of a work team and responsible for its productivity. However, the critical leadership roles discussed below can and should be shared among all members to produce an effective and cohesive team. Research suggests that the team must focus on two categories of leadership roles and tasks during group meetings: (1) achieving the team's goals and (2) maintaining team cohesion and participation (i.e., "group maintenance").

A. Roles for Goal Achievement:

1. INITIATOR: Gets the meeting off to a good start. Defines the task or goal to be tackled and any known constraints on solutions.

2. INFORMATION/OPINION GIVER: Shares knowledge and opinions about the problem with other members.

3. INFORMATION/OPINION SEEKER AND CLARIFIER: Asks questions to get views and data on problems. Rephrases/reflects another person's statements to confirm understanding of what was said.

4. INTEGRATOR: Points out relevant relationships among ideas being discussed.

5. DEVIL'S ADVOCATE: Keeps group open to different viewpoints. Offers alternative problem analyses and solutions. Acts to protect team from premature closure on action options.

6. SUMMARIZER/CONCLUDER: Keeps group focused on tasks and schedule. Periodically summarizes discussion and tests for agreement on decisions. Ensures team decisions and follow-up actions are clear.

B. Group Maintenance Roles:

1. SUPPORTER: Encourages all to participate. Gives feedback and praises positive contributions.

2. HARMONIZER: Uses humor and other means to relieve tensions. Works to reduce the negative aspects of conflicts which may arise.

3. BALANCER/CONSENSUS TESTER: Tries to balance participation. Keeps dominant members from taking over; encourages shy members to talk. Probes extent of team members' support for decisions.

File: MSWORD "GPLEAD91" Revised 3-8-91 Jim Brady
ACTIVE LISTENING: A CRITICAL MANAGEMENT SKILL

"...Today's successful leaders will work diligently to engage others in their cause. Oddly enough, the best way, by far, to engage others is by listening--seriously listening--to them. If talking and giving orders was the administrative model of the past fifty years, listening (to lots of people near the action) is the model of the 1980s and beyond."

Tom Peters, Thriving on Chaos: Handbook for a Management Revolution (page 524)

Listening to other people is hard work--if you do it right. Passive listening means that we relax and let our minds wander during a conversation. Our minds enjoy going off to focus on apparently more interesting distractions. We may rationalize by assuming that the mind can process multiple ideas simultaneously. However, for most of us, our failure to concentrate results in our getting incomplete messages from the person attempting to communicate with us. Active listening means that we keep a tight rein on our mental processes and keep them focused on the person with whom we are communicating. Just as when we play a radio, we keep tuned to one station at a time if we want good reception. Following are some suggestions for managers who wish to become more active--and therefore better--listeners.

"Nature has given to man one tongue but two ears, that we may hear from others twice as much as we speak." Epictetus

1. If you want to learn, listen more and talk less:

Managers are commonly asked for their opinions, advice, etc., so it is easy for them to spend more time talking than listening. However, actively listening to employees, customers, suppliers, and other "stakeholders" can make the difference between a good manager and a bad one. The manager who spends less time talking and more time listening will better understand the organization's problems and what people think can be done about them.

2. Use "MBWA" to learn what is happening:

Research into "excellent" American companies revealed that many of their executives practice various forms of MBWA--Managing by Wandering Around. This means that you get out of your office and talk to people, but more importantly actively listen to them. The primary purpose of MBWA is to get first hand information on what is going on. A manager should not use MBWA in ways which undermine his/her subordinate managers or supervisors. Listening to employees and acting on the results is also an effective way to empower them. In short, the willingness of managers to listen can make employees feel that they are important.
Active Listening

3. **Practice Your Listening Skills:**

Following are some ideas for better listening:

a. **Concentration:** You should focus physically and mentally on the other person while he/she is speaking. Actively process the verbal and nonverbal messages being sent to you. **Do not interrupt** the person because you are eager to respond. Likewise, don't stop listening and start mentally preparing your response so you will be ready to answer as soon as they stop talking. You may miss what they said while you were concentrating on your response. Use verbal and nonverbal signals which indicate that you are listening (using your eyes, nodding your head, etc.).

b. **Confirmation:** To confirm that you understood what the person communicated, try reflecting back to him/her the message you received. You can thus summarize their message and repeat it back to them in your own words. If you want them to keep talking, you also can use such statements as:

"Could you tell me a little more about that?..."
"You feel that this wasn't the correct decision because..."
"You obviously feel very strongly about that, don't you?"

Using "reflecting" statements or questions helps you avoid making value judgments about whether the person is right or wrong. At this stage of the conversation, you want to keep the person talking until you understand his/her position. You do not inject your opinion unless or until the situation really requires it.

c. **Completion:** Completing the communication process will depend upon the objective of the meeting. You can use active listening and reflecting skills to help a person talk through a personal or work problem. This approach is more helpful in many situations than trying to give your own views and advice. People who are able to express themselves without being interrupted or criticized often get insights on how to solve the problem themselves. Even if the problem discussed is a work problem which you need to address, active and reflective listening can help you better understand what needs to be done.

Practice your listening skills at home and work and see how they help you better understand people by really hearing to them. Use reflecting skills to let them know you are listening by adroitly mirroring back their messages to them. Reflective listening can also be useful when people ask for your advice, but don’t really want it! People may even thank you for the "advice" when all you did was lend an empathetic ear.

*****

File: WORD5 "LISTENHO.DOC" Rev. 3/8/91
A CHECKLIST FOR IMPROVED LISTENING...

(How many of these do you practice?)

____ When I give an instruction, do I obtain feedback to assure I am understood?

____ Do I give my listeners cues to know when "to tune me in"?

____ Do I understand that I not only have the right to influence others but they also have the right to influence me?

____ Do I know my biases and prejudices so that they do not unduly filter out certain messages?

____ Do I understand that people "speak" through a myriad of non-verbal ways, that I must "hear" this communication too?

____ If I were listener, would I listen to myself?

____ Do I understand that when a person feels he is being understood, he tends to be less aggressive and less defensive?

____ Do I understand that being a good listener does not mean I must believe what I am hearing or subscribe to the values of the speaker?

____ Do I understand that I am learning little when I am talking?

____ Do I try not to over-respond to emotionally charged words?

____ When I disagree with something, or find something exciting, do I take pains to listen carefully?

____ If I am having trouble being understood, do I understand that the burden is on me to try to understand the other fellow?

____ Do I know when I may be intimidating listeners through threatening behavior?

____ Can I tell when there is a hostile, emotionally charged atmosphere?

____ Do I consider the person involved as well as the situation?

____ Have I taken pains to understand this person?

____ Do I listen for what is not being said?

____ Do I listen for feeling tone as well as for words?

____ Do I also look as if I am listening?

BASIC STEPS IN PROBLEM SOLVING

(You may wish to refer to the Problem Analysis Sheet as you go through the following Problem Solving steps):

I. PROBLEM CLASSIFICATION

A problem can be described as a deviation to be corrected or a performance gap to be filled. More specifically, a problem may exist in either of the following situations:

A. Current Performance Levels Do not Meet Standards: A problem can be an undesired deviation from an existing performance standard. Here, problem solving may be the restoration of conditions which existed before the deviation occurred. Problem solving would not increase organizational performance levels; it would only restore previous levels.

B. A Need to Innovate or Increase Quality: A problem can also be defined as the difference between where you are now and where you want to be in the future (e.g., the gap between your present conditions and your desired future conditions). While current performance may meet the organization's existing standards, it may not be adequate to meet changing needs of key clients or stakeholders (particularly if your competitors are performing better than you). In this case, the problem is trying to establish new higher standards and performance levels through innovation and quality improvement. (For further information on definitions see Kepner and Tregoe in the Reference list)

II. STEPS IN PROBLEM SOLVING

1. Define the problem or performance gap as clearly and completely as possible. (What, when, where, how, and who?)

Be sure you are working on the root problem and not just a symptom or a part of the problem. Balance "objective" data with your own feelings about the situation.

2. List causes of the problem (or reasons for pursuing improvements).

Sometimes the problem situation is imposed from above and the causes may not be so evident. If so, it may be better to focus more on the positive aspects that can be worked into your analysis and planning. "If life hands you a lemon, make lemonade."

3. Define the essential conditions or criteria which a solution or proposed change must meet in order to be satisfactory.

How will you, your boss, and other key actors or stakeholders measure success in solving the problem or achieving your improvement goal? What indicators will tell you when the job is done? Criteria for assessing the feasibility of an option could include: technical or substantive factors; socio-cultural factors (e.g., support for the outcomes by clients or implementing staff), financial or cost factors; policy or legal factors; or political factors).
STEPS IN PROBLEM SOLVING (CONTINUED)

4. List possible solutions to the problem (or options for reaching your improvement goals).

Use Group Brainstorming (the Technique of deferred judgment) or similar discussion methods to generate as many action alternatives as possible. This means that critiques or negative comments are not permitted during the listing of ideas. The goal is to get everyone involved in proposing creative options, and this requires an environment in which they are free from judgments and criticisms. After everyone has had an opportunity to contribute ideas, the group can modify, augment, or combine listed options. Then, the group can evaluate the options against specific criteria. (For more details, see sheet on Brainstorming).

5. Evaluate the proposed options against your criteria.

Discuss possible negative side-effects of each alternative. Who will support or oppose a particular option?

6. Select the option which best meets your criteria.

7. Check the selected action option against your original problem or goal definition to see if they are consistent.

8. Make an implementation or action plan.

This plan should cover the critical elements of design, approval, funding, implementation, progress monitoring, and use of monitoring information for any needed modification of operations and/or goals. You also may want to discuss strategies for getting support for your plan. (Refer to the Project Planning Sheets for more details.)

9. Inform those who need to know about your decisions.

10. List major follow-up actions and assign staff to these. What information is needed to track progress? When will the group meet to assess implementation progress?

11. Begin implementation of your plan.

12. Decide how to use this experience to improve future planning sessions.

References:


PROBLEM ANALYSIS SHEET

(Before using this sheet, see sheets on Problem Solving Steps & Brainstorming)

1. Define the problem or goal in specific terms (what, where, when, who?):

2. List the specific problem causes (or reasons for selecting the goal):

3. List alternatives for solving the problem (or pursuing your goal).
   (Use Group Brainstorming techniques to generate several options;
   then select the three most attractive options and list below:
   Option 1: ____________________________________________
   Option 2: ____________________________________________
   Option 3: ____________________________________________

4. List the criteria for assessing the feasibility of implementing each solution you have identified above. Examples:
   a) Political feasibility: Will your superiors support it?
   b) Legal feasibility: Will present laws or rules permit it?
   c) Financial feasibility: Can you afford to implement it?
   d) Socio-cultural feasibility: Will it be acceptable to (1) people who will implement it and (2) concerned clients?
   e) Technical feasibility: Is it professionally sound?
      Does it address the problem/goal you defined in Item 1, above?
   f) Other: ____________________________________________

5. Rate the feasibility of each option on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 10 and select the best one:

   CRITERIA: --- > POL LEG FIN SOC TECH OTHER: ______
   RATING TOTALS CHECK BEST SOLUTION:
   Solution 1: ______ ______ ______ ______ ______ ______
   Solution 2: ______ ______ ______ ______ ______ ______
   Solution 3: ______ ______ ______ ______ ______ ______

6. Review the actions taken above and make any needed modifications.
   After selecting the best action option, you can use the Project Planning Sheet to outline implementation steps.
USING BRAINSTORMING TO IMPROVE YOUR OPTIONS

1. WHAT IS BRAINSTORMING? Brainstorming is a group discussion technique used to encourage the members to be free and creative in generating options for solving problems and improving operations. After the problem or goal is clear to members, they are urged to make suggestions for action and these are recorded. No evaluation of suggestions is allowed during the brainstorming phase. After enough options are listed, then discussion proceeds to improving on the list and then selecting the best ideas for further action. The objective of brainstorming is to get higher quality innovations or improvements by generating more options from which to choose. It has been estimated that an average of 50 ideas may be needed to result in one implemented innovation. Brainstorming tries to eliminate the common problem of group members being reluctant to contribute ideas because they fear criticism by others. Better discussions usually result from groups of 6-10 members. Larger groups may be divided up for brainstorming and the results of the different groups can be combined later.

2. HOW DOES BRAINSTORMING WORK? In a brainstorming session, the problem or objective is defined in specific terms (including any real constraints which must be considered). After everyone understands the objectives and constraints, all members are encouraged to suggest as many options as they think of. Novel or wild ideas are encouraged. It is useful to have both a group facilitator and a person who can quickly record ideas coming from group members. There is a free flow of ideas and each idea is immediately listed on a board or flip-chart. No comments or judgments are permitted on any idea until the brainstorming phase is completed. This ban also applies to the use of facial expressions or other non-verbal language to indicate disagreement with an idea. Brainstorming is also known as the Technique of Deferred Judgment because everyone awaits until after the brainstorming before making judgments about the quality or practicality of a proposed action. The facilitator may use summarizing or reflective listening techniques to be sure that the contributor's idea has been understood. Group members may offer suggestions which build on ideas contributed by others.

After the group reaches a plateau in the brainstorming phase, there can be a discussion of the listed ideas to clarify or generate additional ideas. For example, in looking for ways of improving service or products, you might consider: Adaptation: (e.g., car seat belts were adapted from airplane seat belts), Combination (combining separate travel request and approval forms into a single form), Magnification ("family-size" products), Minification (bikinis); Reversal (turned inside out); or Rearrangement. After the group has finalized its list, the ideas can be screened against feasibility criteria to select the best ones for follow-up.

3. IS THIS PROCESS TIME-CONSUMING? Sometimes. However, proponents of brainstorming argue that it helps produce better action alternatives because it generates more ideas from which to choose. It also permits a more creative use of your human talent by providing a climate in which people feel freer to contribute. Moreover, as a group becomes more experienced in effective team work and problem-solving techniques, the brainstorming phase should require less time.

*****
Critical Success Factors

(Screening and refining ideas from Brainstorming session)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>&quot;Brain-stormed&quot; CSF</th>
<th>Well-specified CSF</th>
<th>Measure of performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MORE IDEAS AND TERMS

Managing Change: "Why do some firms prosper and grow in the midst of change, while others deteriorate and decline? We believe the answer lies in the ability to manage change. This ability stems from accepting change as opportunity, not threat....We define an entrepreneur as someone who redeployes assets and resources from areas of low productivity and yield to areas of high productivity and yield. Entrepreneurs achieve this redeployment by innovating, which consists of the systematic anticipation, recognition and exploitation of change. Change is the basic fuel of innovation, its source, its raw material...Innovation needs to be organized. It is a process--no less a learnable skill than time management, planning, or delegating.....Innovation must be no less ongoing and routine than quality control or financial review." Source: M. Robert and A. Weiss, The Innovation Formula, (Harper and Row, 1988).

Facilitation: "Very simply, a facilitator is a person who helps a group free itself from internal obstacles or difficulties, so that it may more efficiently and effectively pursue the achievement of its objectives for a given meeting....Effective facilitation is at the core of group-oriented approaches to problem solving, planning, and decision making....Managers are being asked to do more with less. Learning and practicing facilitation skills will be the surest way for managers to provide the new level of leadership required to meet these challenges, and this is true regardless of industry or professional occupation." Source: T.A. Kayser, Mining Group Gold (Serif Publishing, El Segundo, California, 1990) pp. 12-13

Enjoyment: Enjoyable or optimal experiences are those in which: (1) We confront tasks we have a chance of completing. (2) We are able to concentrate on the task. (3) The task has clear goals and provides us with immediate feedback on how we are doing. (4) We are working with a deep but effortless involvement that precludes awareness of everyday worries and frustrations. (5) We can exercise control over our actions. (6) Concern for self disappears during task performance, but the sense of self emerges stronger after the experience. (7) Time seems to pass much quicker or much slower than normal...."The task is to learn how to enjoy everyday life without diminishing other people's chances to enjoy theirs." Source: Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience (Harper and Row, 1990) pp. 49,70.
PROJECT PLANNING WORKSHEETS  
(For Planning Improvements)

1. Org. Symbol/Name: ___________________  
2. Date: ______ 199_ 

3. Project Title: _____________________________ 

4. Describe improvement to be made: ________________________________ 

5. Who will benefit from this improvement?: ____________________________ 

6. Focus of improvement (check one or more): 
   ___ Quality  ___ Quantity  ___ Timeliness (speed) 
   ___ Reduce cost  ___ Other (Specify: ____________________________) 

7. List major tasks required to make the improvement:  
   Who will do What? Where? When? (Use additional page if needed.) 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TASKS</th>
<th>ACTION OFFICER</th>
<th>START DATE</th>
<th>END DATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8a. Resources needed (Funding, staff time, supplies, space): 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF RESOURCE</th>
<th>AMOUNT</th>
<th>SOURCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8b. TOTAL COST: ________________________ 

9. What are the key factors working for or against the proposed improvement?: 
   NEGATIVE FACTORS: ________________________________ 
   POSITIVE FACTORS: ________________________________ 

10. Rate the feasibility of the project (circle number): 
    PROBABILITY OF SUCCESS: 
    FEASIBILITY FACTOR                  LOWER -->-->-->--> HIGHER 
    Legal (laws/rules will allow)        2  4  6  8  10 
    Political (support by superiors)     2  4  6  8  10 
    Technical (expertise, equipment)     2  4  6  8  10 
    Financial (cost-benefit payoff)      2  4  6  8  10 
    Socio-cultural (support by implementers, clients) 2  4  6  8  10 

   Agreed on an OVERALL RATING: --- >--- >-->

11. Overall Feasibility Decision: Is plan worth pursuing? 
    If "No", abandon/revise plan. If "Yes", go to Page 2.
12. **Project Team:** Who will get project approved and executed?
   
   **Leader:**
   
   **Members:**
   
13. **Key Supporters and Opponents:** Whose support is vital for success of the project? What are their reasons for supporting it? How do you convert current opponents?

   **WHO NEEDS TO SUPPORT IT? | REASONS FOR SUPPORTING?**
   
   **SUPERIORS:**
   
   **FINANCIERS:**
   
   **PEER OFFICES:**
   
   **IMPLEMENTORS:**
   
   **CLIENTS:**
   
   **OTHERS:**

14. **Special Action Assignments:** Outline actions needed to address key issues of project approval and implementation. (Cover Negative Factors and areas of Low Feasibility on Page 1, plus actions needed to get support from key stakeholders identified in Item 13.)

   **ACTION NEEDED | ACTION OFFICER | TARGET DATE**
   
   
   
15. **Documentation Assignments:** Who will prepare the data and documentation needed for project approval and funding?

   **Formal Proposal:**
   
   **Equipment/Space:**
   
   **Budgets:**
   
   **Staffing:**
   
   **Action or Transmittal Memorandum:**
   
   (Refer: Sheet on "Completed Staff Work")

16. These Project Planning Worksheets were completed by:

   **Name(s)/Telephone #:**

   **File:** WORD5: "PROJSH91.DOC"  PM/TD: Jim Brady-Rev. 3/6/91
I. BACK TO BASICS?

*Completed Staff Work* has been defined as the study of a problem and the presentation of a solution by a subordinate in such form that all that remains to be done on the part of the superior is to indicate approval or disapproval of the recommended or completed action. This definition usually applies to staff work within a large organization and a Staff Paper or Action Memorandum is used to address problems, obtain decisions, and record these actions in the organizational memory bank.

*Completed Staff Work* can be a significant way of getting support from your "Front Office". However, it is important that you understand exactly what your superiors expect in the way of staff work and action proposals. For example, a senior A.I.D. manager recently expressed concern that Action Memos in AID/W often do not objectively analyze action options or present meaningful choices to the top officials expected to act on them. Instead, the analysis is often "mushy" and represents excessive compromising in the clearance process. The same manager observed that many of the problems involved should not even be raised to the top of the organization, but resolved by lower level managers.

II. FOCUSING ON PROBLEMS

A supervisor commonly judges subordinates by their ability to prevent or resolve problems. In this case, a "problem" is defined as an undesired deviation from performance standards which is deemed significant by someone whose opinion counts. This means that you have performance standards which help determine when a deviation exists. You also need to ensure that the deviation is seen by your boss as important enough to constitute a "problem" which merits his/her action. Don't pass the responsibility for problem-solving to your superiors if you have the authority and resources to solve it yourself. In some cases, a "problem" may also be defined as a gap between present and desired conditions. For example, a system may meet current organizational standards but the standards themselves call for less than what is needed to meet the changing demands of clients or other stakeholders. Completed Staff Work and an Action Memorandum may therefore be the tools for proposing improvements or innovations. However, if you use the Action Memorandum primarily as a means of "selling" your proposal, it may not really represent Completed Staff Work. Completed Staff Work means that you present your superiors with thorough and impartial information on which to base their decisions.
III. GENERAL FEATURES OF AN ACTION MEMORANDUM

A. Format and Questions to Ask: Following is a general outline of a Staff Paper or Action Memorandum and some questions to ask when filling in each section. Feel free to modify to meet your needs or meet unit standards.

1. Definition of the Problem

What is the deviation or gap you are addressing? How did it occur? Why must we address it now?

2. Background Factors

What are the causes of the problem? What has been done before? How have conditions changed? What do we know about similar situations elsewhere? What do "experts" say? How was the current problem analysis conducted? What data were used?

3. Alternatives for Addressing the Problem

What action alternatives were considered? What evaluation criteria were used to compare alternatives? What are the best two or three alternatives and why were these chosen? Who supports or opposes which options?

4. Recommended Alternative(s)

Which alternative(s) do you recommend for approval and why? What are the costs (immediate and longer term)? What are the major benefits? What are some possible negative effects of this alternative? Who supports the proposal and why? When will the action begin? Who will implement?

B. Other Factors to Consider: You should touch base with all concerned parties before you submit the formal Action Memorandum. As a matter of professional courtesy, the content of the memo should be seen by all who have a vital interest in the proposed action. Also get written clearances where these are required by the organization. If certain parties refuse to concur in the proposal, this also needs to be made clear to others clearing or approving the Action Memorandum. The "bottom line" is this:

IF YOU WERE YOUR BOSS, WOULD YOU APPROVE THE RECOMMENDATIONS MADE AND THUS STAKE YOUR PROFESSIONAL REPUTATION ON THEM BEING RIGHT? IF NOT, DON'T SEND THE MEMO SINCE THIS IS NOT YET COMPLETED STAFF WORK!

*******

File: WORD5 - "STAFWK91" Jim Brady Revised 3/8/91
SELECTED BOOKS ON MANAGEMENT AND INNOVATION

Jim Brady
Revised March 1991

(Many of these are available in paperback)


Ingle, Sud. *Quality Circles Master Guide.* (Prentice-Hall, 1982)


Kotter, John P. *The General Managers.* (Free Press, 1982)


Pinchot, Gifford. *Intrapreneuring.* (Harper & Row, 1985)


Steiner, George A.. *Strategic Planning: What Every Manager Must Know.* (The Free Press, 1979)


********

File: WORD5: "BOOKS91.DOC"  JRB  3/12/91
APPENDIX "A": Sample Staff Survey Questionnaire

TO: _______Bureau Staff

FROM: Jim Brady, Management Consultant

SUBJECT: Survey of staff views

I am currently conducting some organizational studies for the _______Bureau, and the AA, Ms./Mr.____, thought it would be valuable to include staff views on current Bureau operations and trends. We would therefore appreciate it if you would complete the attached three-page questionnaire. Many organizations conduct such staff surveys from time to time to help identify areas which need improvement and areas where good practices need support or reinforcement.

On Pages 1 and 2, please take a few minutes to indicate your agreement or disagreement with 20 statements about your Bureau in general or the particular office or unit in which you work. More specifically, you will be asked to check one of the following five responses to each statement:

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

If you are not sure how to respond to a statement, you can check: "Neither agree nor disagree"

Page 3 of the questionnaire asks for your written comments and suggestions on the organization.

Do not give your name on the questionnaire. Individual questionnaires will be treated as confidential and only summaries of the information will be included in my report. However, I will use actual written statements from the last page, unless editing is needed to protect the source of the statement. I will provide a report of findings to each concerned Office or Division. I will also respond to requests for a copy of the report from participating staff who do not have ready access to office copies.

SEND THE COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE IN THE ATTACHED ENVELOPE.
IF THE ENVELOPE IS MISSING, PLEASE MAIL IN ANY ENVELOPE TO ME:

   James R. Brady
   c/o ____________, Room ____, SA 2
   Mark: FOR ADDRESSEE ONLY

If you have any questions, contact me at PM/TD (202-663-2280) or at home (703-255-3270). Thanks very much for your help.
Check appropriate box after each statement. (Please do not give your name.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The goals and priorities of my office/unit are clearly defined.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. People in my unit work well together.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I am usually allowed to do my job as I see fit.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Most important decisions in the Bureau are made at the top.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Bureau goals and priorities have been clearly defined.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. My office/unit gives high priority to continuously improving the quality of what we do.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Top managers in our Bureau welcome staff ideas for improving operations.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Cooperation among offices in our Bureau is very good.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Staff meetings in my office are usually well-managed and effective.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. There is a well-defined system which employees can use to contribute ideas for improvements.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please go on to Page 2.
11. My office/unit has made significant improvements in our operations during the past few months. | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree nor disagree | Agree | Strongly agree |
---|---|---|---|---|---|

12. In our office, clerical staff are given respect and recognition for their contributions. | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree nor disagree | Agree | Strongly agree |
---|---|---|---|---|---|

13. Our Bureau's work is critical to achievement of A.I.D.'s overall goals. | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree nor disagree | Agree | Strongly agree |
---|---|---|---|---|---|

14. Opportunities to take job-related training have been adequate for me. | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree nor disagree | Agree | Strongly agree |
---|---|---|---|---|---|

15. My job is usually rewarding and interesting. | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree nor disagree | Agree | Strongly agree |
---|---|---|---|---|---|

16. My supervisor welcomes staff suggestions for improving operations. | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree nor disagree | Agree | Strongly agree |
---|---|---|---|---|---|

17. When I do excellent work, I receive recognition for it from my superiors. | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree nor disagree | Agree | Strongly agree |
---|---|---|---|---|---|

18. Our Bureau has excellent relations with staff in USAIDs and other bureaus. | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree nor disagree | Agree | Strongly agree |
---|---|---|---|---|---|

19. We need to streamline the procedures for processing documents and messages within our Bureau. | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree nor disagree | Agree | Strongly agree |
---|---|---|---|---|---|

20. All things considered, I would rather work here than in any other Bureau in A.I.D. | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree nor disagree | Agree | Strongly agree |
(If you need more room, write on the back; indicate which question you are referring to.)

1. What are some current management practices in the ____ Bureau which you think are GOOD?

2. What are some current management practices in the Bureau which NEED IMPROVEMENT?

3. Please suggest any specific changes which you think would make the Bureau a better place in which to work:

4. DEMOGRAPHIC DATA:
   Your rank/grade: GS ___ or FS ___. Years of A.I.D service: ___.
   Number of employees supervised: ___ (If none, put in a zero).

THAT'S ALL. THANKS AGAIN FOR YOUR HELP.
PLEASE RETURN THE QUESTIONNAIRE IN THE ATTACHED ENVELOPE.