

About the Author

As a Chartered Mechanical Engineer and member of the Institute of Mechanical Engineers he was trained to solve presented engineering problems. As Chief Engineer and in other executive roles he was predominantly required to solve presented organisational problems.

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Almeric would consider himself to be an organisational problem solving journeyman who constantly strives to improve his own and other's performance. He works with an applied assumption that all leaders and managers in organisations share the same intent.

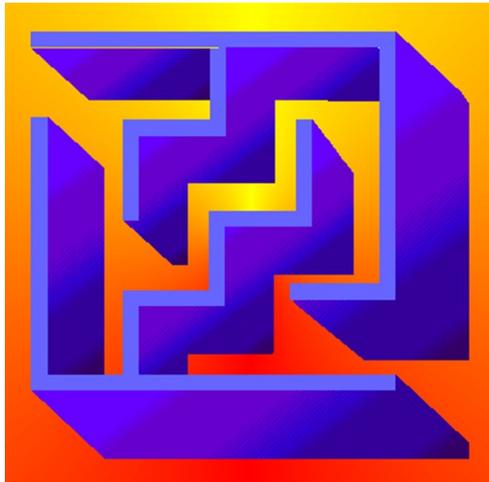
Almeric is the founder of The Centre for Organisational Management that focuses on improving the quality of leaders and managers decision-making to enable individuals, teams and the whole organisation to succeed. Executive coaching programmes are designed to enable the individual and their teams to directly transfer the developed competencies into the performance of their organisation.

This book is dedicated to my dear and beloved sister Ann.

Almeric Johnson

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LEADERSHIP AND
ORGANISATIONAL PROBLEM
SOLVING: LEARNING TO
LEAD AND MANAGE THE
ORGANISATIONAL MAZE



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*Developing the Necessary Organisational Leadership and
Management Competencies to Enable You and Your Organisation
to Thrive in Today's Business Environment*

“We are all redundant if we have yesterday's skills”

A Toffler

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PRELUDE

The title “Leadership and Organisational Problem Solving: Learning to Lead and Manage the Organisational Maze” stems from my experience of using an organisational approach for identifying sustainable solutions to presented problems. This approach enlists that all important leadership competency, (E)-Factoring, the capacity to (E)nable people and organisations to succeed.

My motivation for writing this book was to share my passion, experience and developed approach for successfully improving the overall performance of individuals, workgroups, teams and the overall organisation. To demonstrate that the use of out of date management practices, along with the lack of understanding of what is being led and managed, in organisational terms, compromises decision-making that collectively leads to the creation of further unwanted dysfunctional organisational practices. My desire is to persuade leaders and managers to change their current decision-making along with the use of out-of-date management practices to solve today’s presenting organisational problems. I firmly believe that these observable displaced practices and the failure to lead and manage the organisation significantly decreases our ability to compete effectively in today’s competitive global markets. Corporate United Kingdom is unable to compete on cost but we are able to compete on high-end quality product, intellectual property and services.

The developed approach is to *think organisationally* and to focus all the activities, including the *management technologies*, to create effective high performance organisations. To achieve this I wanted to share how an organisational thinker develops their intellectual capacity for successfully improving decision-making and directly translating that into the organisation’s overall performance. This is an essential competency as all leaders are finally judged on their ability to successfully implement the decisions they make.

Working in a variety of organisational situations I found it difficult to keep reworking the same problems in different guises and failed to understand why executives and managers were apparently content recycling the same presented problems. Having an insatiable curiosity along with a desire to improve the situation, I began a long journey of instituting performance improvement initiatives that, in part, succeeded and at times were vehemently challenged. It was these sets of behavioural practices that came into play, particularly when a programme was becoming accepted and more expansive, that were being used consciously or unconsciously to aggressively resist change. The nub of the problem was individuals and associated power cabals protecting their created defensive mechanisms that were being used as defences against anxiety at the expense of their organisation's performance.

These induced displaced decision-making practices consistently created other common organisational problems. These problems manifest in communication, workgroups (teams) performance, interdepartmental collaboration, conflict management, and individuals becoming disaffected through not being able to influence the decision-making processes that could be consistently traced to the induced dysfunctional decision-making practices.

Following my passion to improve the situation and develop sustainable solutions it became obvious that the common denominator in any organisation is the organisation. It became evident that when leading and managing major organisational *transition for change* I was acting as the organisation's *interpreting agent*. This helped me to define my role to ensure that the design of the organisation enlisted the directed motivational intent of the human resources, systems and *management technologies*.

To become successful in resolving presented problems it was essential to have the ability to drill down to find the root cause of the problem. The developed process for successfully achieving this competency was to *think organisationally* as it allowed me to address the behavioural requirements of the organisation. It allowed me to separate out and identify the dysfunctional distracting organisational behaviour induced by that organisation's dysfunctional problem solving decision-making practices.

Developing a theory in practice I began to identify basic tenets that assisted in focusing my development. For example, the notion that the organisation is the common denominator clearly identifies that the organisation is not there for the employees or the *management technologies*, it is there to satisfy a primary delivery service. That services the notion that the individual, the systems and the *management technologies* have to at all times work in harmony and to collectively complement the organisation's delivery performance culture. These tenets are important in that they allowed me to understand that when designing high performance organisations you designed the organisation from the service delivery end allowing all the other activities to support and reinforce that identified delivery performance culture.

These basic concepts are applicable and are generally accepted, yet the real issues that had to be addressed were the induced anxiety, the harmonisation of the technical along with the social needs of the individual and the workgroup (teams) to collectively satisfy the organisation's need to respond to its environment. Therefore, the created environment within the organisation provides the context for all these developmental activities. Requiring that the development of the organisation, the development of human resources, all *management technologies*, systems, procedures, practices and decision-making are understood to be within the context of that organisation's developmental responsive needs. It was the developed understanding of these contextual relationships that allowed me to improve my own *intuitive cognitive organisational awareness* for successfully solving induced organisational problems.

Positioning myself to apply these basic assumptions creates a requirement that when the organisation is in transition all other activities are also required to work through a parallel transition process. The developed understanding of these basic concepts identified the need to develop an applied process for managing the induced anxiety that inevitably surfaces when individuals and sets of political power cabals are required to change their current protective practices.

To address these issues I developed an organisational transition for change process that acknowledged the existence of these behavioural practices. It is these developed processes that I want to share with you to enable you to understand these practices. This developed understanding will enable you to develop your *intuitive cognitive organisational awareness*, decision-making implementation and to significantly improve your own and your organisation's performance.

The benefits of using this approach are enormous in that it enables multiple problems to be resolved simultaneously through the reduction of dysfunctional practices. It improves cost by not having to service these dysfunctional practices. It effectively harmonises the social, the technical and focuses everyone's motivational intent. It has the capacity to reduce induced organisational stress, fatigue, sickness and absence, high labour turnover, poor productivity, quality and service delivery. It significantly improves the strategic, operational decision-making and importantly the successful implementation of those decisions, which have been achieved through the clarity of a shared organisational understanding and developed common organisational dialogue. These developed processes are motivationally addictive and will leave you asking why you were not made aware of them earlier.

The "Power of One" is invested when executives change their mind-set and adopt an organisational approach to solve presented problems: their influence and power increases significantly.

List of Footnotes

- Throughout this book we shall use the terms leadership and management as being two parts of the leader's role. Leadership is influencing the direction to the applied design of the organisation, the systems, the procedures and practices. As part of their role, leaders have to remain responsible for the management of the implementation processes: all leaders are finally measured on their ability to effectively deliver the decisions they make.
- The use of the term groups refers to the notions having been developed within a therapeutic environment.
- The term workgroups is being used as a collective term for this management technology, for discussing the general behaviour of groups, teams, meetings and committees, which all further differentiate by task activity. Their title and structures change according to their position in the ranking order within the organisations and the task they have to achieve. Often these attributed titles can distract us from the common behavioural dynamics that all of these listed practices display.
- Throughout this book the convention of using fantasy to mean conscious fantasy and phantasy to mean unconscious phantasy.
- Culture is seen as "the customary and traditional way of thinking and of doing things, which is shared to a greater or lesser degree by all its members." (Jaques 1951)
- Climate is not itself an organisational process or area, but the outcome of the interaction of processes and areas. (Hutton 1972)
- A BELIEF is something we accept as true. A VALUE is a standard or outcome by which you determine if something is important to you. BOTH serve as guides for making decisions and are at work all the time.

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Last but not least my partner Margaret, who has encouraged, endured and supportively enabled me to produce this publication.

INTRODUCTION

For an organisation to perform effectively, to avoid decay and to survive, it has to constantly renew itself through a continuous process of responding to its environment. Working through these processes should enable you to make the connection that the organisation is leading the change. You, as its “agent” (Argyris, (1999) are required to interpret those needs and have the capacity to develop the supportive organisational processes that effectively match the identified responsive behaviour. This creates an expectation that the adopted style of leadership matches the organisation’s developing responsive performance needs. The adoption of an organisational leadership approach challenges existing leadership theories and practices by identifying that *people are motivated by the purpose and not the person*.

We need, in today’s mercurial business environments, to be able to evaluate and agree our strategic intent, to make quicker decisions that can be achieved through having in place effective business environmental scanning. MBA studies teach us to assess, decide and execute; we need to reduce the time spent on this process. It is reported that leaders spend 50% of their time using management technologies interrogating the data, checking the facts and assessing it. They spend 30% of their time in discussion to achieve consensus. This leaves only 20% of an executive’s time for implementation, which is often delegated. Yet a leader’s performance is measured not on their decision-making but how they implement those decisions. Executives often don’t get directly involved in the *transition for change processes*, as they are often too busy managing the politics, *management technologies* and the demands of the imposed systems protocols.

Adopting an organisational approach demands that the organisation becomes the common denominator for all decision-

making. The organisation is the vehicle that enables us to collectively cooperate to satisfy the organisation's needs. It also provides the opportunity to harmonise the two technologies – the social and the technical. This approach is designed to satisfy that fundamental need for individuals, within social environments and their organisations, to understand what something means. This is critically important, as all organisations and the management technologies they employ cannot make decisions. This is the prerogative of those who design and operate them.

The organisation provides the platform and reference point for all decision-making. These are applied assumptions that require that those individuals and management technologies employed by an organisation be deployed to satisfy that organisation's needs. It also implies that when designing the organisation you do so to enlist the *motivational intent* of all your employees.

Our failure to keep pace with the organisation's responsive needs creates a tendency to employ out of date management practices. These redundant practices cause us to become stuck in the past. "We are all redundant if we have yesterday's skills." Developing your capacity as an organisational leader and problem solver is immediate, as your organisation needs to remain responsive and will not wait for you to develop these skills. Doing what you have always done is no longer an option.

The transition from a systems led approach to an organisational led approach requires a mind-shift from one perceptive state to another. The structure of this book has been designed to enable you to make that necessary transition. Working through this transition process creates an opportunity for you to begin to *think organisationally* and develop your *intuitive cognitive organisational awareness*; allowing you to develop your capacity to *adapt your organisational leadership style* to satisfy the presented situation. These developed practices and applied skills will improve your strategic and operational decision-making. Critically your ability to implement strategies significantly improves by delivering predictable performance outcomes. All leaders are finally judged by their ability to implement decisions, not how they make them.