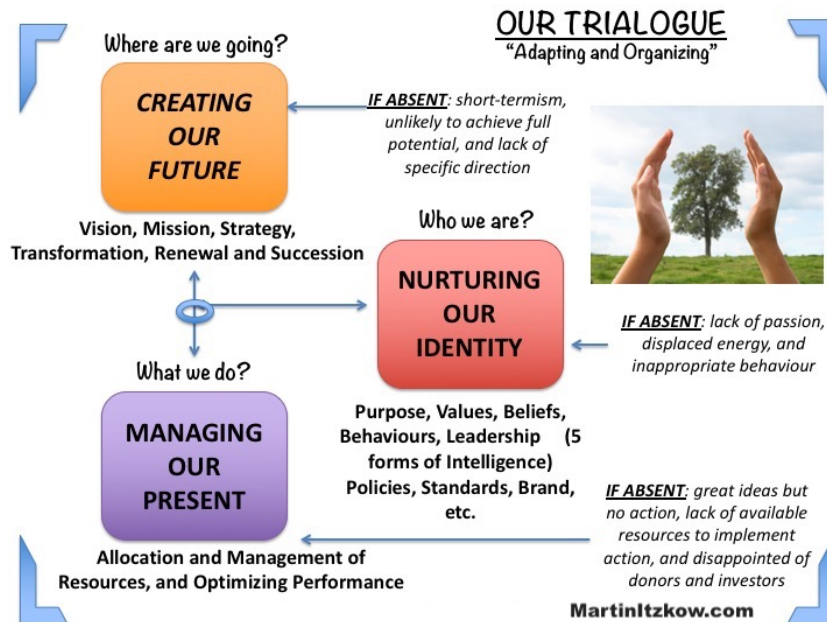


The Trialogue

The overarching framework for organizational planning.



The model that I propose that underpins everything in strategic organizational alignment process and best describes what effective organizations need to do is called the "Triialogue". The Trialogue is based on what effective organizations of all kinds need to do to remain viable. It sets the conditions and the ways the organizational systems need to make decisions and how they must align with the expected organizational performance.

There are shared functions and characteristics based on the following three themes:

A – MANAGING THE PRESENT

This is about what we do every day and seeing our activities bear fruit. It is right to give attention to improving the ways we do our everyday work and to enjoy the good things happening around us. The risk is that managing the present absorbs all energy and we tend to lose sight of where it's all going and what it is all for?

B – CREATING THE FUTURE

The question here is to ask: What will we need to do tomorrow? This creates the future as we stand back and scan the horizon. What is happening in the world? Would do we need to do to remain relevant in our new worldview that ensures our activities meet tomorrow's needs and not just today's? It is true that organizations that do not find time to do this will find that it has become yesterday's news. Perhaps it is sad but true that they may fail, be irrelevant, fade away, and/or limp along.

C – NURTURE IDENTITY (OUR CULTURE)

The adaptive organization is able to nurture their identity. It is able to answer the question: Who are we? Why we Exist? What difference will we make? It actively nurtures a shared understanding of identity. How are we to make choices about something as challenging as our future? Clearly, there is a need for good information and a compelling rationale. We make pragmatic judgments about what is possible and achievable. However, that may not be enough.

At one level defining identity is simple enough. It is about answering the following straightforward questions:

- What are we here for? (Why do we matter and what difference are we making?)
- What are our beliefs and principles that guide us living out our purpose? (What do we stand for?)

I believe that will be necessary, however, to undertake this inquiry in a way that allows sufficient thought, depth and authenticity to take place. The task here is not to identify what we aspire to do so much as what we actually believe and have at least a measure of commitment to do. It may be true that we often fail to live up to our principles unless we are clear about our real values and how we will be living these in a range of real-life contexts.

Perhaps, there is a belief with some people that the requirement for authenticity means that the conversations that the organization will have about their identity are often profound, revealing and challenging.

Perhaps these conversations may well reveal the organization's dark side. (Disagreements about the intent of the organization, its real value in the community, and what is not possible to do)

Maybe this is an important opportunity to address these tendencies that should not go unacknowledged. If we are making choices that matter to us and will be long-lasting, it is important that there is a strong adherence to the organization's purpose and a set of core and agreed to values that guide all the major decisions (stated in a way that it provides the highest level of clarity of living these, day-to-day).

It may be useful to answer these questions:

- What are we passionate about?
- Can we be best in our world?
- What drives our organizational engine to be successful now and in the future?

These Triologue activities are not separate. They interact with each other and influence one another, like a continuing conversation. I believe that all leaders in organizations need to decide who and how these three conversations are to be managed and by whom? The Triologue model is a recursive concept where the questions it poses need to be asked at each level the organization and, ultimately, by every individual providing services. This means that every layer and group in the organization has to make sense of things in these terms.