De-cluttering organization and management

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For sure this sounds familiar to you: more meetings, more reports, more presentations, more justifications, more appraisals, more goals,..., simply more bureaucracy deviates everyone's attention from what truly matters with higher cost, lost opportunities, and wasted time as a result. It is time to de-clutter management and organization to remove these viruses.

It is one of these infecting habits. When volatility rises, complexity increases, and uncertainty influences decisions, then most organizations tighten their management practices with yet another procedure rather than to fundamentally re-think their design of management. Just another spring cleaning does not do it. Four design steps de-clutter your organization for a higher ability to act.

Result = limited ability to act

Over the years, organizations collect bureaucratic management tools that slow work done. They introduce new routines to standardize work flows while making them inflexible with interesting signs. Leaders divert to command & control rather than to interact with employees. And, more rules tighten compliance rather than to increase choice with decisions and actions. As a result, organizations become even more fragile and decisions get locked in –lacking the necessary speed, agility, and

resilience to cope with the challenges of a turbulent environment.

The cause of a faulty management toolbox

The clutter such organizations collect comes from a faulty control-oriented managerial toolbox that was designed for past stable times with little change. Just another spring-cleaning with revised leadership development, more coaching, or jet another change effort does not do it. Moreover, such initiatives reinforce the interfering trend.

Management needs design

In a dynamic environment with high volatility, complexity, uncertainty, and ambiguities, management needs a new design. Tools need to focus the attention if they are to successfully deal with increasing volatility. The purpose of routines is to raise awareness as a means to cope with complexity. Managerial interactions need to enhance trust to reduce uncertainty, and rules should allow for choice rather than to standardize responses. This new enabling toolbox with its supporting instruments, routines, interactions and rules increases the speed of decisions, the agility to address the challenges, and the resilience against external interference.

Redoing the toolbox requires more than just spring-cleaning. It requires a new design along these generic principles. Nut, this is not yet another top-down control program. Management Design is about a collaborative team effort that initiates a fundamental transformation.

As every company and leader is unique, the organizational context varies, and the specific situation always is different, there is no one size-fits all solution. But there is a new approach with the ability to deal with an every changing leadership environment. We use the Agile Diagnostic to help management teams review their practices and engage them in a conversation on a management approach that serves their purpose.

Learning: People learn from the experiences they make. As such Management Design initiates the natural learning rather teach outdated practices. Design thinking embarks on deep insights on practices that work in a dynamic environment. This is why we use the Inner Game techniques to address a dynamic environment when the future is opaque. The Inner Game principles are simple:

awareness, choice and trust –the fundamentals of fast organizational learning.

Dynamic capabilities: in a dynamic environment, many of the traditional managerial capabilities and practices are obsolete. They simply cannot deal with ‘moving targets’. This is why Management Design builds managerial and organization capabilities for higher speed (to react on external changes), agility (to adapt fast on changes) and resilience (to withstand ongoing threats). In combination, this enhances the managerial ability to act – the capacity of an organization and management to cope with a dynamic environment whatever its challenges are!

Design for a higher ability to act

Rather than retuning existing managerial practices to fast-fix ongoing problems, Visual Design Thinking is about de-cluttering the organization from faulty managerial practices to build the capabilities for a higher ability to act. The management design built on principles for superior speed, agility and resilience has a higher chance of success in turbulent times. As a result, decisions are made faster, the organization responds in a flexible way, it is more robust, and overall your management has a higher freedom to make the decisions and lead the organization into the future. Apart from the obvious, de-cluttering saves huge costs and reduces entrepreneurial risks.

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