

Chapter 4

Systems Intelligence in Business Organisations

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Why do some projects and companies succeed better than others? Which characteristics could explain this success? Could we explain the success of some change initiatives in business organisations with the notion of systems intelligent behaviour? Is it possible to describe systems intelligent behaviour with practical examples? What can be seen as enablers and what prohibits the use of systems intelligence in the business environment? In this paper, I have described some of my experiences of change programs and compare the success of these initiatives with elements described in Systems Intelligence.

Introduction

Today, we are facing major changes inside business organisations as well as in our external environment. We keep hearing that managing change is a key to success in development projects. However, few succeed in successfully implementing change. Why?

Senge (1990) states “People want to change but not to be changed”. How could we help and enable organisations to change without being changed? Most people would like to have continuous change in their life. Most companies are facing continuous change pressures in their markets, organizations, and way of working, products and customers. *There seems to be a change generating system in place.*

One could think that there is a match between the needs of an individual and the needs of companies. Unfortunately, this is not the case. There seem to be a system in place that introduces changes mostly based on the economical and profitability reasons, not for the sake of creating better products for their customers, more competencies and skills for their personnel and new opportunities for their suppliers.

Most people would like to have continuous change in their life. Most companies are facing continuous change pressures in their markets, organizations, and way of working, products and customers. There seems to be a change generating system in place.

The challenge is: How to manage the change and how to run change programs where:

“New organizations are built, jobs are created or reduced”

“New ways of working are introduced”

“New products are launched”

“New markets are conquered”

All the above questions include a system with several involved parties like: customers, suppliers, personnel and their families, labour unions, politicians, media, auditors etc; the list is endless. Seldom are the overall system and its interactions understood by the companies driving the change. The key thing is how to “outline the system” where the change is going to take place and who are the actors involved.

The approach and thoughts introduced in Systems Intelligence emphasis the important elements needed in Business Organizations in order to succeed. By Systems Intelligence (S.I.) (Saarinen et al. 2003) mean “intelligent behaviour in the context of complex systems involving interaction and feedback. A subject acting with S.I. engages successfully and productively with the holistic feedback mechanisms of her environment. She perceives herself as part of a whole, the influence of the whole upon herself as well as her own influence upon the whole. By observing her own interdependence in the feedback intensive environment, she is able to act intelligently.”

Senge (1990) identifies five key themes as cornerstones of learning organisations:

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|-----|------------------|
| I | Personal Mastery |
| II | Mental Models |
| III | Shared Vision |
| IV | Team Learning |
| V | Systems Thinking |

By integrating the concept of S.I. with Senge’s five disciplines, a link between Personal Mastery and Systems Thinking has been found and the outcome is S.I. (Saarinen and Hämäläinen 2004), defined: “We propose Systems Intelligence is as the link between I and V. The way we see it, Systems Intelligence is Systems Thinking having become an integral part of a person’s Personal Mastery. Like Senge’s Personal mastery, it is about the way a person conducts her life, and at the same time, it is about Systems Thinking, i.e. the focus is on the impact and workings of the holistic and systemic structures that encompass the environment of the person”.

Systems Intelligence in Business Organisations

How could change managers in a business organisation utilise the above thesis for the benefit of the company and its counterparties?

The key success factors in my experience have been the following:

1. Understand your system, who are involved and what their perception to the subject is.
2. Don't underestimate the need of sharing the big picture and vision. This gives the people the opportunity to see themselves in the whole.
3. Build an environment where different perspectives are collected and listened and let the interaction take place openly.
4. Create tools to visualise and simulate the change and the steps to the vision.

All these 4 elements can be found in the description of systems intelligence.

Case studies

I will share in this paper few examples, how I have experienced and managed the above elements of systems intelligence in big organisational changes. In all these cases the impact on the organisation has been substantial; there have been new roles and responsibilities as well as layoffs. There are links to be found to the basic elements of systems intelligent and learnings how one could manage the change better.

Case 1a & b. Personnel down sizing (layoffs) situation in a Banking Branch, two opposite experiences

Case 2a & b. Building global horizontal support organisation, two different experiences

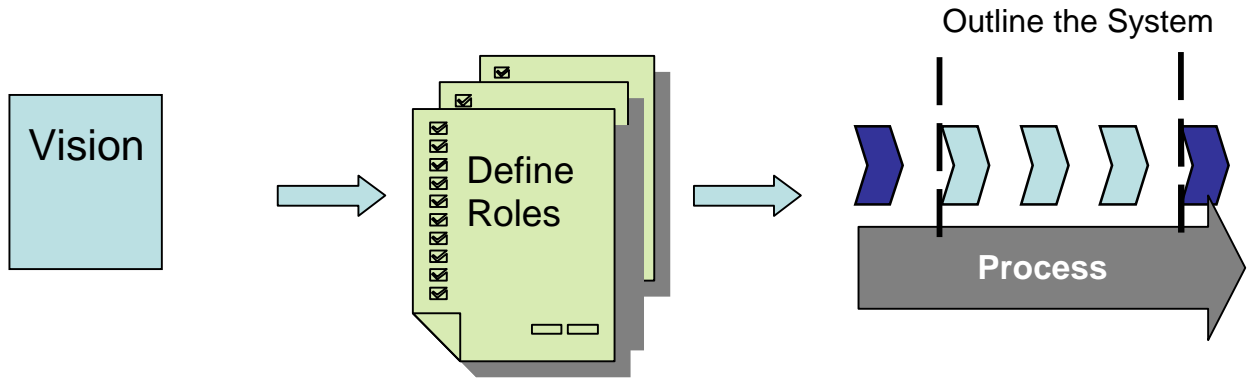
Case 3. ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) system project and implementation

While analysing these cases myself, I have found clear similarities with at least *three systems intelligence enablers*: *The first* being how the vision has been shared, *the second* being some simulation or prototyping to illustrate the change of roles and responsibilities and *the last* but not least the visibility of management support and management's capability to drive the change. The above-mentioned 4 success factors should be in place when conducting successful change programs. You can find a summary after each case, what has been the outcome of the appearance or non-appearance of these three enablers.

Systems intelligent operating model

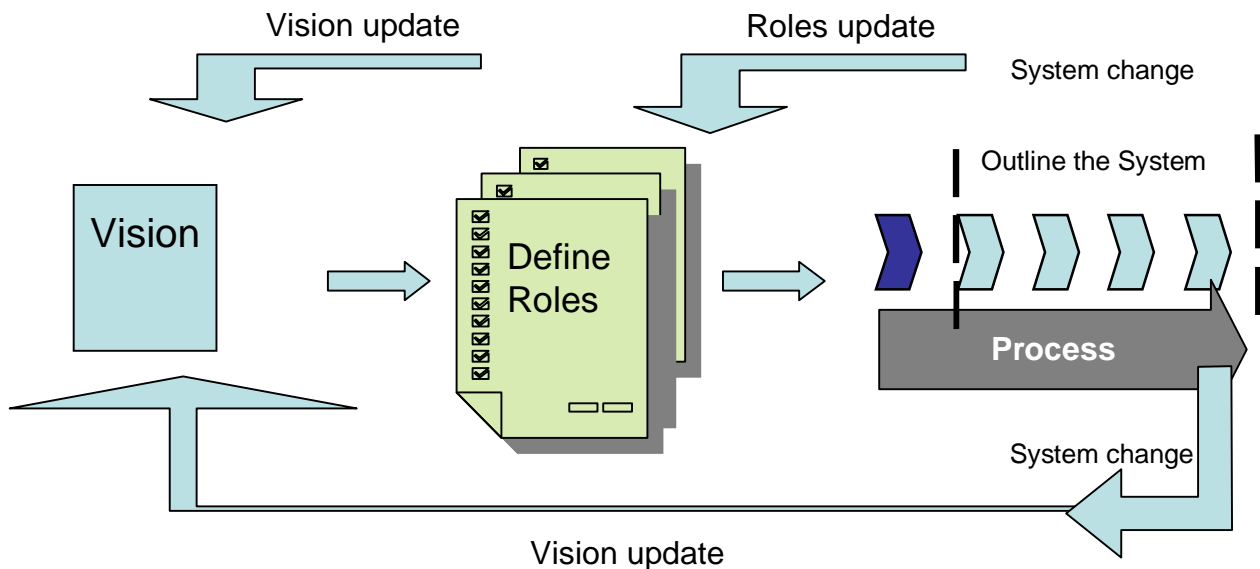
One of the biggest change resistance elements is that people cannot understand what and how the change will impact in their future life, job or interdependences in their existing system environment. This will create fear and uncertainty among people in the organisation and they become resistant to the change. The capability to decrease the factors to change resistance will in fact have a straight link to the implementation time of the desired change.

In picture 1 I illustrate how I see the systems intelligent operating model. The *process starts* with sharing of the vision. The *second step* is defining how current roles and responsibilities in the system will change. The *final step* in the process is to outline, what is the overall system (people, organisations) and specify the interactions in the whole chain.



Picture 1. Systems Intelligent operating model

I have found it vital to understand and continuously track what is the system environment where my organisation and company is today. It is equally important to be sensitive when there are changes happening on the borders between different parties in the system and outside. The process to manage this system intelligent operating model is described in the picture 2. The change in the system will most often have impact also on the roles and responsibilities within the members of the system or even increase the pressure to update the vision. This has been the key process (picture 2) to be managed in all my change management experiences. Shouldn't sharing of the vision and commitment building be continuous effort in all business organisations by default?



Picture 2. Change in the system triggers different update processes

A Change in the system environment has always an impact on roles and responsibilities and will also create a potential need for the vision update. The different process steps are described in picture 2.

Tools to illustrate the change

Often big change plans and visions are based on intuition or experiments and new innovations. Any means to illustrate or simulate future change will help to build a concrete and common understanding about change and reduce the change resistance. You can utilise different types of prototyping methods to build the picture about the future state and illustrate the magnitude of the change. The modelling or prototyping will of course be based on your best understanding about the new state, based on today's facts, but it can also be the source for new innovations as well as bridge to something new.

I have created and successfully used some tools to support the understanding of the magnitude of the change. A useful tool that has helped in the agreement making of roles and responsibilities has been a simple A4 template, where all roles are defined activity by activity together with the parties in the system. This discussion paper acts afterwards as an arbitrator and finally as an agreement between the members in the system. This agreement making process covers: who is responsible, who will make the decisions, who should be informed etc.

I have also used another tool to visualise how different activities and roles connect different activities in the process and what their interdependencies are. This tool has been especially useful in transformation projects where functionally organised companies are implementing process thinking. This tool has helped the organisation and its members to see the big picture, understand their own role and the borderlines within their system. Any error that occurs in the front part of the process has an implication on the following activities and the ultimate result. By utilising different simulation and prototyping tools I have found most efficient to describe these interlinks for the personnel, especially when the roles and responsibilities have changed.

My inspirer in *learning from Simulations and Pilot Installations* has been Karl-Erik Sveiby, professor in Knowledge Management at the Swedish Business School of economics and business administration in Helsinki. He opened my eye's, how important it is to give tools to enable people to understand the change and generate the "click" by themselves.

Personnel down sizing (layoffs) situation in a banking branch, two opposite experiences

Through these two opposite cases I will describe how two different approaches ended up. What where the elements that made the results of the Case 1 a successful? And why the Case 1b turned out to be not so successful.

Case 1a

Background

In the Finnish Banking sector in the mid 1990's, it was inevitable to downsize internal operations to meet requirements for long-term financial competitiveness. It was not easy to convince the personnel in a profit making company, that one third of the personnel had to be laid-off, because of the financial situation. The change was due to the heavy restructuring of the finance market and the development of end customer self-service services.

My role in this change was to support the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) with the simulation tool and support him in all financial areas. The person to drive the S.I. operating model was my boss, the CEO.

Common vision creation:

After severe discussions with the management, we decided to create a simulation tool to visualize the business model attributes. This tool was designed to enable us to simulate and visualize all profitability factors and their relations to the next 5-year profitability. The power of this exercise was that all personnel groups were involved in the processing of the financial 5-year plan and could see the big picture and understand that the only conclusion was that we had to size the internal operations by 30% in order to survive in the long run.

We invited representatives from all functions, departments and labor union to participate to this “strategy creation session”. The actual session started by sharing the shareholder expectations. Then different teams started to estimate their figures in the 5-year plan. The sales team was estimating the sales and margin levels, HR team headcount and the compensation plan, the finance teams the financial market expectations, level of funding cost etc. Then the actual exercise started by collecting the different teams’ inputs and after many iteration rounds, it was crystal clear to everybody in the room that with the existing cost structure and revenue estimates the target result would not be achieved and it was unanimously understood, that heavy decisions and actions were a head of us all.

What made this “strategy creation process” different from a normal business planning process? All people that would be involved in making the change happen in practice were involved in the planning process and they could understand the urgency of change, and could approve of the coming actions. This simulation session took us one day for 100 people, and as a result, we could start the down sizing process and everybody felt that their view had been counted and respected. One has to remember that at the beginning of 1990’s it was not common at all to involve personnel in decision-making. The normal approach would have been just to kick people off without any explanations. The system intelligent approach in this case did not totally sweep away the fear and uncertainty, but it did diminish it.

Management support

The actual layoff process was built on the following principles:

Open communication about the decision-making process and criteria’s were considered highly important. Afterwards you might say the communication was almost over killing. Good So!

Transparent employee assessment rounds: We made assessments to all personnel in order to define competence levels and to find the best match for existing jobs. Managers held one-to-one discussion based on the assessment and listened to the expectations of each individual. This enabled also cutting employees’ expectation levels.

CEO openness: The CEO was very open and committed to take all responsibility about the change and he also put his personal character at stake. He was famous for his value based management, and high respect for individuals. He had been very successful in the good times with his management style and now it was the time to test if his approach could be successful when things got hard. He was acting as he was speaking. He promised that he would ensure equality throughout the decision- making process. So he did indeed. He had the courage to fight for justice, although there were many sceptics during the long and painful change journey. His

personal vision was to make the process the way that all the laid off people were employable and positive after our process. He could indeed prove that his personal characteristics and courage did make a big difference!

Conclusion

After the process we wanted to observe how we had succeeded. Obviously there are no explicit measurements in a situation like this, but we collected as a “heat meter” the number of visits to the occupational health care during and after the process. Although health care people have to keep their information confidential, they could report the overall “atmosphere” level and compare that to other companies. We also collected information about how well our personnel were re-employed through the outplacement processes. On the other hand the employee satisfaction figures from the remaining organisation were also reflecting the success. This kind of process will have an impact on all the people involved.

The summary of these analyses was that almost all dismissed persons were employable after the process and many found interesting new careers through the offered outplacement program. Even the remaining personnel could continue their daily efforts for the company in a normal way. The CEO kept his promise and he was trustworthy. So he was the individual to drive the change with a S.I. capability and understanding already in the beginning of 1990’s.

Case 1b

The following experience is from a similar type of layoff process, but with totally different outcome. Background: During the mid 1990’s the Finnish banking sector continued major restructuring that ended up in many mergers, which then inevitable resulted to big layoffs. Ironically, the Bank from the case 1a was merged to another Bank (case1b) the very same night their lay off process ended. I was nominated to be the responsible for the layoff process by the new CEO. I tried to implement the learnings from my experiences in the case 1a, but this was not accepted. My role turned out to be more theoretical than practical, because all instructions and policies were defined by the CEO and I could not run the process as I would have preferred. The irony in this case is that I was also laid off after the overall process had ended, mainly because I did not follow the “rules”.

Common vision creation

It was not seen as important to share the vision nor the reason for the change. The layoff process was handled like a juridical process, without any space for human interaction and the communications were kept to a minimum.

Management support

The management involvement was business as usual, not showing any interest on the organizational or people issues. Sharing of neither different opinions nor criticism was allowed and the organization was under “fear”. The management was seamless. Management used lawyers as their spokesman and tried to hide from the organization and their employees

Conclusion

How did this process end-up? The remaining organization's recovery time was long, the customer interface was impacted by unhappy customer service people, the laid off personnel were bitter and spread that feeling among their environment and in the media. In other words, the poorly handled process had severe impacts on the business and results of bank 1b. The management underestimated the impact of the badly treated personnel's interaction inside and outside the system. This had major impact on the company's profitability and image within customers and other stakeholders. More systems intelligent approach would have made total different outcome.

	What was driving the change?	Systems Intelligent behavior that enabled the change	Outcome	Sharing of the Vision	Systems Intelligent Leadership existed
Bank A	Long term Financial competitiveness reduction	Simulation of the facts together with personnel representatives, SI leader	Organisation understood the reason for the layoffs and could accept the activities	+++	+++
Bank B	Merge of 2 banks	none	Personnel was in fear and did not trust that the layoff process was fair	--	--

Table 1. Summary of these two Bank branch cases

As a conclusion, these two cases are one another's opposites. The key long term successful result of the case 1 a is that the people that were laid off as well as the remaining personnel could accept the activities and the actions, whereas in the other case; the personnel could not trust nor accept the process and its results. So what does this mean in the long term? It means that people involved in these two cases will remember for their whole life how they were treated in this situation and also act accordingly. I must say, I have not forgotten it yet, though it is already 10 years past. And what are the consequences of this on the company's results, on the people's individual lives and ultimately on our society's well being?

Case 2. Building a global horizontal support organisation

The following two cases cover similar types of organisational re-structuring projects, but the companies described have different backgrounds and cultures, though both are international companies with roots in Finland. Case 2a is retrospective, but in case 2b I will explain how I have planned to utilise systems intelligent thinking (or systems intelligence) and my previous experiences in practise in my present engagement.

Background: Global multinational organisations and their challenges

Today many multinational organisations are functioning in a complex matrix model. They have global common horizontal organisations to support global and local business units. When global processes and procedures manage the operations, it is vital that all stakeholders (businesses, countries, functions) are equally involved in the design phase and that the concept is to continuously improve the processes. Already this fundamental base puts organisations in different starting points.

Often the change resistance is created by non-existent systems intelligent behaviour. Horizontal organisations use a "tell" approach and expect the vertical business functions to implement changes without sharing the vision, asking their viewpoint nor letting them have their own footprint on the plan. It is not possible to implement anything successfully by just saying, this is

mandatory or decided by the management. So you need to get the commitment from the organisation and listen to their viewpoints and perspectives.

Very often travelling is seen as cost element and not as an enabler to the awareness and commitment building. Not very systems intelligent! You often make cost savings in travelling and underestimate the power of face-to-face discussions and relationship building. People located in foreign subsidiaries greatly value the visits of staff from the headquarter and them listening to the local organisations' concerns.

The power of having an ongoing dialogue in the organisation is very often underestimated, as is its capability to involve people and have different perspectives. In Sebastian Slotte's article in Chapter 11 you can read more: "The difficulties involved in improving communication and conversation through dialogue are not due to a lack of dialogical methods, programs and software which there are plenty of. In dialogue and in conversation in general nothing is settled by a communication program, software or espoused rules since developing, learning and sustaining creative conversational patterns is an ever recurrent challenge. In order for a dialogue intervention to be successful, every participant must, so to speak, reinvent the wheel again, by continually challenging her own basic ways of thinking. There is no shortcut."

Case 2a

Background

The company is fairly young and their products are among the most fast developing consumer products. The culture is international, though the organization remains managed in a Finnish style. I was nominated from outside the company to build the strategy and implement a new global indirect sourcing and purchasing organisation.

The starting point was, that this functionality was scattered into all business units and countries. No sharing of information existed, nor seeking for better global agreements. Everybody was just focusing on their own needs and did not care for total cost efficiency. The eye opening happened, when the first calculations were made on the overall company level of spending. It was understood, that the potential cost savings could be achieved only by centralisation of the sourcing function globally.

Common vision creation

Looking back, I would say today that though we had a great vision and mission statement, followed by a sound strategy, we did a few big mistakes. First of all, we did not fully understand (at least I did not) the system environment we were in and who our customers were. Secondly we did not either have clear picture about the roles and responsibilities in our system. These two things lead to the situation, where

- we could not implement our vision and strategy
- we were focusing on the wrong system (i.e. organizations)
- we didn't get the credibility among our customers

- we underestimated the change resistance, as the roles were not clear
- we started to have high internal pressure (conflicts) and disbelief in the project from within our own organization

In other words we did not understand what our system environment was. And we did not understand the coupling link between vision->roles->system (picture 1) This ended up with many conflicts inside the new global organization and with our customers.

How did we continue? After we had understood the situation we started to find some ways to build up the credibility and clarify roles and responsibilities. We also involved people from different organizations to build common ways of working.

To clarify roles and responsibilities, we used a template where we together agreed activity by activity who is responsible, who will be involved and who is informed. This was one way of simulating future roles and responsibilities in advance. All organisations could now “see” the future set-up and understand the common development of new processes and procedures.

We collected teams across business unit, country and function to define together the global procedures and processes. We involved people from different cultures and locations in order to understand their requirements and reasoning for specific information or level of support. This is how they could have their own footprint on the plans and we could get their commitment in the end.

I have found the above method very useful. Even very difficult conflict issues have been agreed between different parts of the organisation. This method ends in creating an “agreement” and I often have asked people to sign it.

Management support

The Management of the company was supporting the project, but probably they were also underestimating the magnitude of the change and the importance of the involvement of the parties involved. The effort was seen more as a cost efficiency improvement project than a big organisational restructuring project.

Conclusion

We lost almost 2 years of valuable time and money. We had many conflicts inside the new organisation; people were uncomfortable mainly because of the big pressure coming from the customers. We lost some good people and also some credibility in the organisation. If we would have understood (including myself) the system environment that we were in and how important it is to first understand your own role in this system and then others, we would have a totally different story to tell today. Nevertheless, today this organisation is running, with new competent management and more learnings. After 3,5 years, I decided to move on and start again the same thing in my present position, and I hope, that this time I do understand how important enabler S.I. is to make a successful change journey.

Case 2b

Background

The Company is 170 years old, one of the Companies that have been the base for Finnish industrialisation since the country's independency. The product's lifecycle is 20-30 years, so the culture is also quite "traditional" and it is more difficult to introduce new ways of thinking and working principles. I am now in the driver's seat. The project is as we speak in the design phase, so I have now all the possibilities to make it a success. So what will be my key learning points from the previous experiences and how will I utilise my knowledge of systems intelligence to make this project a success?

Communication of the vision

First of all I must say that it is not that simple to implement something you know would be the best way, as the company cultures are different and the overall decision making and communication principles varies. Anyway, I feel again, that I have a "mission" to fulfil. I will introduce new ways of thinking and I believe that I can gradually make changes in the overall culture I will use a systems intelligent approach as much as it is possible. I have decided to fight to ensure continuous communication and involve personnel in the process. In short, I will do my best and let's see how far it takes us.

Though the target of the project is to seek for cost efficiency and profitability, I am sure it can be done with respect for the individual. This I learned during the case 1a.

In order to have all needed perspectives I have build the evaluation team so that all our businesses, biggest countries, our corporation and also process knowledge has been covered. I see that this approach has been very important to ensure, that the results of the evaluation phase can be widely accepted. The team has been large, but I am convinced, that this will be the beneficial at a later stage.

Roles and responsibilities

As learning from my previous case 2a. I have realised that we need to clarify the roles of all the parties in the system, not only the new roles. It is also self-evident that I will make all the efforts to understand and correctly define the system environment and the stakeholders in it. We will use Conference Room Pilot (CRP) as a method to illustrate the future roles and responsibilities. In the CRP we will define together the work split between our new global organisation and our internal customers. We will even illustrate the process roles by using coloured caps: corporate green, business blue and support function has the red cap.

Conclusion

I am now at the beginning of my journey and the success of the implementation will show if we have done the right things, at least now I know more or less what to focus on. Still it is good to remember, that all companies and projects are different and the same approach does not always apply, so you need to adapt your approach to the situation at hand.

	What was driving the change?	Systems Intelligent behavior that enabled the change	Outcome	Sharing of the Vision	Systems Intelligent Leadership existed
Global Support Organisation A	All Business Units had their own support function in all countries.No communication in between	not understood. Roles and responsibilities were not clear, though large number of people were involved	Lack of buy-in in the Business Organisation, conflicts in the new organisation	++	--
Global Support Organisation B	All Business Units have their own support function in all countries.No common processes nor applications	Cross business unit teams to define the roles, extra focus on employee perspective	TBD	TBD	TBD

Table 2. Summary of these Two Cases

Case 3. ERP implementation project

While companies have been implementing Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) applications (for example SAP) there have been many failures as well many success stories. When collecting experiences from these projects, I have found clearly few areas where successful projects can be recognised:

1. All different parts of the organisations have been involved in the define phase (business, production, finance, human resources, suppliers, customers, management) of the project.
2. Focusing on building the understanding of what it means to transfer from a functional organisation to process thinking.
3. Building a view on the future way of working by utilising tools and methods to simulate or prototype the future state. One method is to build process maps from as-is processes and the corresponding to-be processes, and the understanding of the change is then communicated through the gap analyses of the current state versus the future state. A more IT -system related prototyping method is to build a CRP to record and test and approve together the future way of working by simulations.

It is important to guide people to understand their new role and ensure that they have the needed competences. This will support their capability to change and make the change happen by the people themselves. In the new way of working in a process mode, it is also important that people understand their own role in the chain and its impact to other people's job in the same chain and to the overall deliverables.

Background

I was nominated as the Project Manager of a large IT renewal project. This was the third effort to implement a new ERP system in this manufacturing company. The two previous attempts had been interrupted or frozen, for different reasons. This third attempt had to be conveyed, because the existing systems were not year 2000 compliant. So we were facing a tremendous pressure to make it happen and also many doubts that the third effort would succeed. An additional challenge was that the chosen application (SAP) had not been implemented anywhere in Finland with that large a scope and as extensively within such a short timeframe. This meant also that experienced consultancy support was not locally available. So all risk elements were there.

Common vision creation

The vision creation and communication was done systematically. The strategy and scope was communicated widely with different communication channels using creative new ways to attract the audience.

The project was focusing on automating the whole value-chain process from sales to production and from delivery to payment. This meant that the exercise was to impact all functions in the company and new process thinking was launched. This put extra effort on the communication and sharing of the big picture. All departments were involved in the design work. Special positive feedback was received from the factory floor “blue-collar” employees, who were invited for the first time to participate in the design work together with the “white collar” workers. We cannot underestimate the impact of these interactions as one success factor of the overall process.

Management support

From day one, the support was there. The request for the very best resources for the project was accepted, even the odd decision about using our competitors consultants in the project were approved. Top management dedicated a lot of their time and literally managed the project by being around; this really gave a great support to our effort.

How to measure the success?

The project was on time and on budget. The production process was up to normal level from day one. The first closing of the books could be processed in normal schedule. But the final success was when the organization started to function according to the defined processes, with increasing efficiency, effectiveness and higher quality.

During the project the project management collected weekly the feelings from each individual. The analysis called Dr. Feelgood (picture 3) showed clearly how differently individuals perceive the same situations. The curves per team were floating between a scale of 1-5, in different sequences. This explains how important it is to collect all team members’ perspectives, as people perceive same things different ways.

Now, 7 years later when I last month met the company HR manager on a business trip and she said to me: “Do you know? Merja, that your SAP project is still recognized as one of the best driven projects in the whole history of the company”. This kind of feedback you seldom hear...though I think she was quite much exaggerating.

	What was driving the change?	Systems Intelligent behavior that enabled the change	Result	Sharing of the Vision	Systems Intelligent Leadership
ERP project	Third effort to implement a new ERP system to the company. Many doubts that the third effort would succeed	Involving fairly all businesses and personnel groups in the planning and implementation. Lots of all types of communication	Successful project, in time, on budget and supporting all BU*s	+++	+++

Table 3. Summary of the Case 3

Summary of key prerequisites to create systems intelligence in the business environment

1. Sharing of the vision and strategy. How could you expect people to change in the right direction, if they don't understand the vision and the overall big picture?
2. The company atmosphere should support and approve outbox thinking and allow for different perspectives to emerge. Otherwise, how could you expect to have innovations and synergies in your initiative, if you don't allow people to express their viewpoints and concerns? Consider all feedback as potential building elements of your future state, not as threats.
3. People must have a strong self-image and courage to express different opinions in order to avoid the fear of losing their job by expressing their attitude or comment on issues that would be for the best of the company's future development, but are currently opposite to the leader's opinions and mindset.

I continuously ask myself the following questions:

How could we create more secure change programs?

How could we prepare our personnel to change?

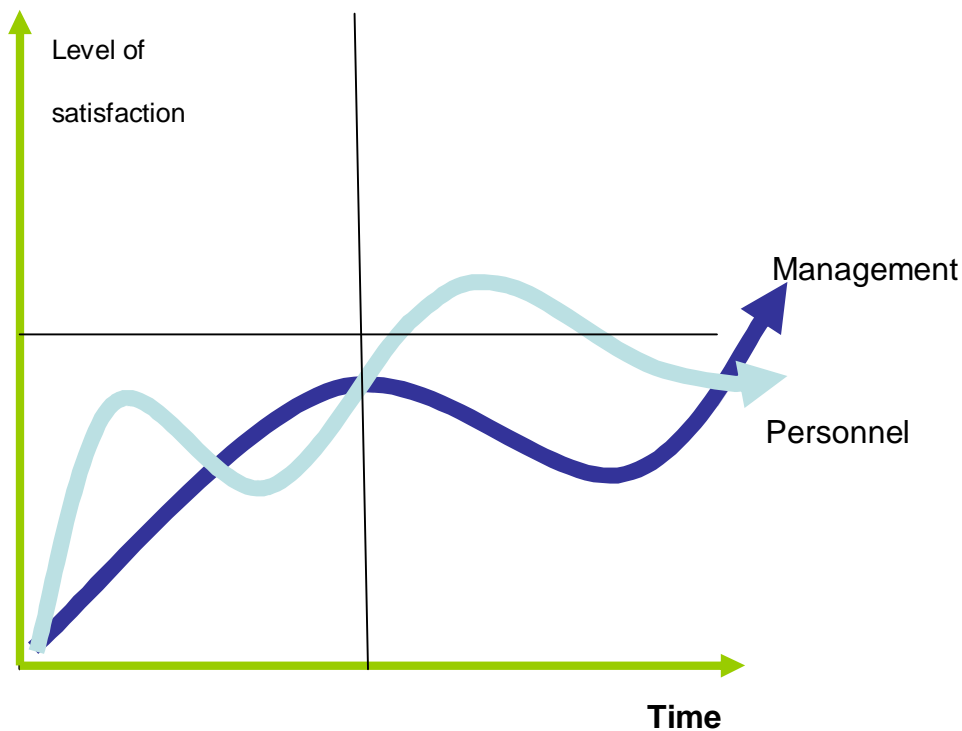
What kind of management style is needed to ensure that people in our organisations would maintain high self-esteem in spite of continuous change?

How to diminish the level of fear in the organisation?

“Flexibility” is an often-used word today. With all the above-mentioned arguments I would say, that only the most open and courageous systems intelligent companies can be flexible. And those who are flexible can react to the continuously changing external market expectations and they will be the winners.

How to analyse the commitment and feelings of the organisation?

A weekly web-questionnaire has proven to be a useful way of collecting the feedback and feelings within the organisation. This barometer has shown that different teams do have different perceptions of the same situations and this also supports the systems intelligent thinking, that people have different perspectives about the same issue or situation. See below the Dr. Feelgood barometer, picture 3.



Picture 3. Dr. Feelgood Barometer

Closing words

My personal inspiration in my working career has always been to create something new to make possible the impossible and to stretch the goal. I have a mission to fulfil and that gives me the ultimate drive and enthusiasm to go on and on. As Professor Esa Saarinen presented in his famous lectures at Helsinki University of Technology: “Why target for 1, if you can reach 1000”. Adapt the conveying attitude: “anything is possible”, “micro changes can start a major organizational change”, you can make it happen!

We should not underestimate the interactions and interdependencies inside the system and with other systems. I have the belief that the way companies’ function inside creates also their external image. If the company treats its personnel badly and creates an untruthful atmosphere, the “behaviour” will be the same towards all the members in the big system, also customers. So it is increasingly important to understand what interactions exist inside our system and external systems, and how far the negative rumour can spread.

The Systems Intelligent behaviour can be promoted by personal excellency, atmosphere, values and organisational structures. The main driver in success stories, often has been one person, who has been able to convince others and had the leadership capability needed to build the “system” and let all involved parties to participate in the change process. One should have the courage to ask other’s about their opinions and respect them having their own perspective. A good team can and should have conflicting ideas in order to create something new. A Change Agent must have the will and personal sensitivity to involve him/her and is willing to risk his/her personality to

drive the change. This means, that anybody can be the catalyst to start a micro-level change that will then spread around and in the end end-up to major business and organisational changes.

How can we describe a person, with systems intelligent capability? He/She must have the sensitivity and capability (will) to put him/her in other people's positions. My conclusion is that we need more systems intelligent individuals, who are dedicated to drive the change process and seek for new way of thinking. I would say by my experience, that system intelligent approach has proven successful in my business career; even though I have not always understood that I have been using the elements of S.I. What a tremendous strong internal power we can empower to harness the personal change factors to enable people to see the potential to change and encourage them with all the opportunities there exists.

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