

34. Organizational System Map

How can I map the key characteristics of my organization?

Key Definitions

An organization is a group of people acting together to realize a shared objective. In an organization, the necessary work is divided among the organizational members (*division of labor* or *differentiation*) and their activities are aligned to jointly achieve the intended results (*coordination of labor* or *integration*). Organizing is about how best to differentiate and integrate activities. This can be called the *horizontal organization issue*, as it is *between* people.

Organizing is also about determining who should steer the activities (*control*) and how much room members should have to determine actions themselves (*empowerment*). This can be called the *vertical organization issue*, as it is about who should have power *over* whom.

Conceptual Model

The *Organizational System Map* gives an overview of the key characteristics found in every organization. While organization charts are the most popular way to picture organizations, this model suggests that organizations can be better understood by recognizing four main aspects: their particular design (*formal organization*), the characteristics growing on top of this formal design (*informal organization*), the people they have on board (*organizational members*) and their underlying beliefs, values and norms (*organizational culture*). These are not *parts* of the organization, found in a specific place, but *aspects* found throughout. Note that this model is the third building block of the *Strategic Alignment Model* (Meyer's Management Model #32).



Key Elements

The four main characteristics of each organization are the following:

1. **Formal Organization.** All explicitly agreed upon arrangements made between people about how to work together are part of the formal organization. These include:
 - a. *Structure.* This details how work is split and assigned to specific people (differentiation) and to whom these people report (control). This is commonly summarized in an orgchart.
 - b. *Processes.* These specify how people need to work together to complete multi-stage activities or exchange information (integration). Here RACI models are often used.
 - c. *Controls.* These are the instruments used to steer people's behavior, such as strategic planning and performance management. See Meyer's Model #11 on the Control Panel.
2. **Informal Organization.** When coordination between people develops organically, but isn't formally arranged, we speak of the informal aspects of the organization. These include:
 - a. *Networks.* These are all connections established between people that can be used to exchange information, influence decisions, and/or get work done.
 - b. *Community.* Even where people are not personally connected, they can experience a sense of belonging, team spirit and mutual responsibility vis-à-vis each other.
 - c. *Leadership.* While management is one of the controls, specified in the structure, leadership is the ability to influence others. This needs to grow, despite one's position.
3. **Organizational Members.** The people that make up the organization are its members. There are three sub-aspects that need to be considered when looking at them:
 - a. *Individuals.* The members can be viewed as a collection of individuals, each with their own personality, knowledge, skills, capabilities, and relationships.
 - b. *Population.* The members also need to be viewed collectively to see how diverse and balanced the composition of each part of the organization is.
 - c. *Engagement.* The members also need to be viewed as more than a bundle of required resources (hands & heads), recognizing their energy and motivation (hearts & minds).
4. **Organizational Culture.** Lurking behind the three front disks is the organizational culture. The culture encompasses the shared worldview of the organizational members (their *beliefs*), the principles they hold dearly (their *values*) and the unwritten rules of behavior that follow from both (their *norms*). Culture subtly influences all three other organizational aspects and can only be influenced back via changes to these three.

Key Insights

- **Organizations are more than their orgcharts.** Organization charts give limited insight into the functioning of organizations, as they only show the (intended) division of labor and reporting lines. How integration and control really (should) happen is not made clear.
- **Organizations have four key characteristics.** Structure is only one of the three elements making up the formal organization. Equally important for understanding organizations is knowing the informal organization, organizational members, and organizational culture.
- **Organizations have a hard and soft side.** The top big disk is the engineered, mechanical aspect of the organization, with hard controls and integrators. The bottom three big disks are the human, social aspects, which allow for soft controls and integrators. These soft aspects *guide* behavior (indirect steering) instead of *determining* it (direct steering).
- **Organizations have a front and back side.** The three big disks in front are the tangible and directly influenceable aspects of the organization, while the organizational culture at the back is difficult to observe and only indirectly influenceable via the front three disks.
- **Organizations have an adaptive and rigid side.** Changing the formal organization is the easiest, while it gets increasingly difficult as you move to the organizational members, the informal organization and ultimately the organizational culture.

Meyer's Management Models

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Publication Schedule

<i>July 2019</i>	<i>Mind the Gap Model</i>	<i>Change Management</i>
<i>August 2019</i>	<i>Digital Platform Map</i>	<i>Digital Strategy</i>
<i>September 2019</i>	<i>Interaction Pressure Gauge</i>	<i>Interpersonal Interaction</i>
<i>October 2019</i>	<i>Revenue Model Framework</i>	<i>Revenue Model Typology</i>
<i>November 2019</i>	<i>House of Engagement</i>	<i>Organizational Engagement</i>
<i>December 2019</i>	<i>Confidence Quotient</i>	<i>Trust Building</i>
<i>January 2020</i>	<i>Competition Tornado</i>	<i>Competitive Strategy</i>
<i>February 2020</i>	<i>11C Synergy Model</i>	<i>Corporate Synergy Management</i>
<i>March 2020</i>	<i>Leadership Fairness Model</i>	<i>Leader-Follower Interaction</i>
<i>April 2020</i>	<i>Strategic Agility Model</i>	<i>Strategy Process Approach</i>
<i>May 2020</i>	<i>Control Panel</i>	<i>Corporate Control Dimensions</i>
<i>June 2020</i>	<i>Rising Star Framework</i>	<i>Talent Management</i>
<i>July 2020</i>	<i>Strategy Development Cycle</i>	<i>Strategy Process Steps</i>
<i>August 2020</i>	<i>7I Roles of the Corporate Center</i>	<i>Corporate Organization</i>
<i>September 2020</i>	<i>Storytelling Scripts</i>	<i>Leadership Communication</i>
<i>October 2020</i>	<i>Strategic Bets Framework</i>	<i>Strategic Decision-Making</i>
<i>November 2020</i>	<i>Rebound Model of Resilience</i>	<i>Organizational Resilience</i>
<i>December 2020</i>	<i>4C Leadership Capabilities</i>	<i>Leadership Competences</i>
<i>January 2021</i>	<i>Digital Product Model Dial</i>	<i>Digital Strategy</i>
<i>February 2021</i>	<i>Digital Distribution Model Dial</i>	<i>Digital Strategy</i>
<i>March 2021</i>	<i>Empowerment Cycle</i>	<i>Employee Empowerment</i>
<i>April 2021</i>	<i>Innovation Box</i>	<i>Innovation Approaches</i>
<i>May 2021</i>	<i>Knowledge Sharing Bridges</i>	<i>Best Practice Sharing</i>
<i>June 2021</i>	<i>Followership Cycle</i>	<i>Leader-Follower Interaction</i>
<i>July 2021</i>	<i>Everest Model of Change</i>	<i>Change Management</i>
<i>August 2021</i>	<i>Fruits & Nuts Matrix</i>	<i>Priority-Setting</i>
<i>September 2021</i>	<i>Powerhouse Framework</i>	<i>People & Organization Strategy</i>
<i>October 2021</i>	<i>Strategy Hourglass</i>	<i>Strategy-Making Steps</i>
<i>November 2021</i>	<i>Disciplined Dialogue Model</i>	<i>Interpersonal Communication</i>
<i>December 2021</i>	<i>Team Building Cycle</i>	<i>Team Building Process</i>
<i>January 2022</i>	<i>Market System Map</i>	<i>External Analysis Framework</i>
<i>February 2022</i>	<i>Strategic Alignment Model</i>	<i>Business Level Strategy</i>
<i>March 2022</i>	<i>Creativity X-Factor</i>	<i>Creativity Enhancement</i>
<i>April 2022</i>	<i>Organizational System Map</i>	<i>Organizational Analysis</i>
<i>May 2022</i>	<i>Corporate Value Creation Model</i>	<i>Corporate Level Strategy</i>

June 2022	Change Manager Toolbox	Change Methodologies
July 2022	Value Proposition Dial	Business Level Strategy
August 2022	Embedded Identity Model	Personal Awareness
September 2022	New Pyramid Principle	Presentation Approaches
October 2022	The Tree of Power	Organizational Power
November 2022	Stakeholder Heat Map	Stakeholder Management
December 2022	Needs Radar Screen	Motivation Analysis
January 2023	Customer-Centricity Circle	Organizational Design
February 2023	Partnership Distance Model	Interorganizational Relations