

Corporate Strategy in a new context:

Next Culture Organization – Sustainability and Fulfillment at Work!

Are you inspired by the current job you are doing day in and out? Would you say your job fulfills you? Do you really like working in the company, where you are employed and are you fully with it?

Few people can answer these questions with a clear YES. The opposite is the case. The number of people who enter wholeheartedly the front door of a company every day being fully inspired is evanescently low. That's sad, but true. Most of the people work in their current job, because they "have to". Well, the money has at least to be earned somewhere in order to be able to pay the rent, own a car and go on holiday with the family. Therefore it seems to be just normal to endure pressure and stress. Those who think that a job should be fulfilling are being laughed at and asked to keep on dreaming, right?

But what if something else was possible? How would a company look like in which employees were inspired, fulfilled and satisfied? How would an organization of next culture (NCO = Next Culture Organization) look like?

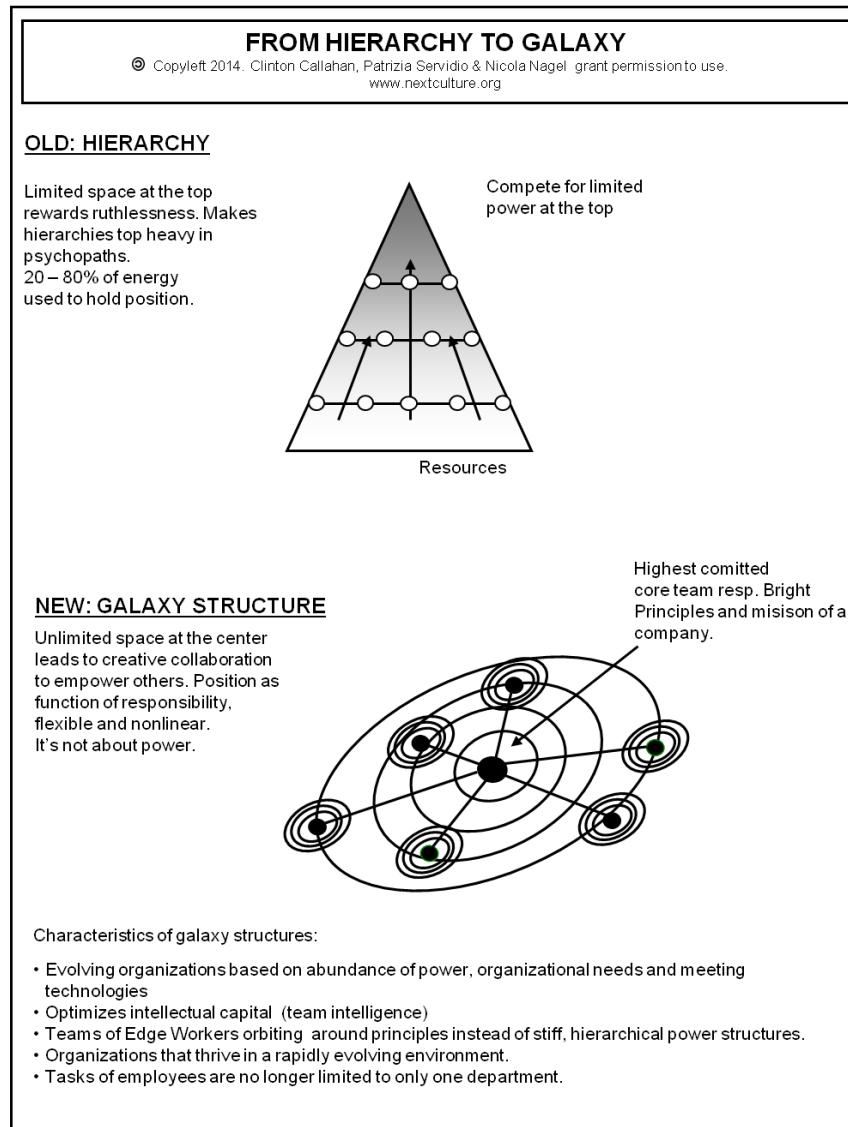
For the next couple of minutes let all the concepts, structures and rules you have heard about corporate management and strategy behind you. Imagine that there was nothing, but a white sheet of paper and let us do some wild brainstorming – just roughly.

A new purpose

It starts with a Next Culture Organization having a totally different purpose than the old focus of profit maximization. The new vision is about "maximizing sustainability and fulfillment at work". Pure creation of financial value is out; sustainability with regard to both the Earth as well as the employees is in. The old survival mode is replaced by more consciousness, creating, community and empowerment of each individual and thus the whole organization.

From hierarchy to galaxy

Along with that goes a new organizational structure, away from the hierarchical structure towards a galactic structure. In an NCO there is no longer a top down approach, nor fixed job descriptions in determined departments. Core of the Next Culture Organization is instead a so called task pool. All tasks and projects arising in the company are done by employees with corresponding talents that are already there or can still be developed. The employees choose the tasks themselves. Imagine you could choose which tasks you would like to do, no matter which department or area they belong to. Imagine further you could get rid of all tasks you don't like or even hate. Instead of fighting them and probably getting sick, because these tasks suck your energy and are getting on your nerves, a colleague who really loves these kinds of tasks will take over. Imagine you could pick from this task pool the ideal work for yourself and what you do all day long would suddenly make sense. Not only that. You could make a tremendous difference in the organization and the world.



This means furthermore that you are no longer bound to a specific department. You may take over several core projects that belong to a division, but it is also possible that you take over certain parts or tasks from other departments (Sub-Galaxies) that inspire you. The most important thing is that you bring in your talents and fill in a certain task with all your heart and fully responsible.

It is no longer about positions and fixed job descriptions, but about flexibility. The focus is on the talents and qualities of the employees.

Edge Workers as space holders for projects

Each project is driven by a team of responsible colleagues. In each project there is a so called *Edge Worker*. They are not classical leaders or managers, who are as far up in the hierarchy as possible and tell the rest of the team how things go. An *Edge Worker* is rather a „space holder“ for a project. This means that they set the context/the frame and keep rolling the energy of the



bright principles inherent to this project (e. g. clarity, community, creativity, quality, service) so that the project can be realized by employees who feel attracted to it. However, *Edge Workers* do not take a higher position than anybody else of the team members. All are on the same level. While in the ordinary business context the word team means most of the time „Great, another person does it, I don't have to take responsibility“, in an NCO the word team gets back its original meaning, which is „Absolute responsibility of all project members“. Employees are no longer managed, but empowered. Control is replaced by trust and the team acts as vivid unit of responsible team members.

Applied Feedback Culture „Rapid Learning“

Another aspect of a Next Culture Organization is a sustainable and applied feedback culture. In today's business life the feedback culture is basically limited to giving feedback and rating the employees and bosses twice a year – which is once at the beginning of a year when the goals are defined and once at the end of the year, when the goals are reviewed. In an NCO instead, the so called “Rapid Learning” is fully integrated as ongoing feedback culture in daily life. Imagine all employees had the understanding that feedback is gold and that it would be natural to support each other through feedback and coaching in order to grow. There would be no resentment just because you mirror your colleague something that hasn't worked. Instead there is an open culture of constant change, which is appreciated by all employees.

Relational communication

Next to a working feedback culture a relational communication is another core element of a Next Culture Organization. This kind of communication is based on the consciousness about the fact that there are e. g. 4 different kinds of listening and 6 kinds of speaking and about how to use them. Imagine it was no longer about being right or about who had more power or got the bigger bonus. Instead of the game „I win – you lose“, which is based on competition, a new game called „Winning Happening“ spreads. This means that colleagues do not only work together with each other, but even work in creative collaboration for each other and the company vision.

Decision making is no longer based on the motto „top beats down“ or „the majority wins“, but it is instead based on the so called „Systemic consensioning“. The decision is made in favor of the option with the least resistance. This prevents employees from building resentment against each other and from playing the “I win – you lose” game.

Being human

All this - and many more aspects – would lead in a Next Culture Organization to the fact that you can simply be human. You would no longer have to deposit your human vulnerability at the front door and put on the mask of distant professionalism, but could instead be wholeheartedly at work with all your skills and talents. How would this be for you?

In the following you find some of the core aspects of a Next Culture Organization in contrast to ordinary company culture.



Characteristics of ordinary company culture	Characteristics of a Next Culture Organization
Profit maximization.	Sustainability maximization
Survival.	Living + creating.
I win – you lose.	Winning Happening.
Hierarchy structure.	Galaxy structure
Control.	Trust.
Employees as machines /capital resource.	Employees as human beings.
Work as „necessary evil“ to earn money with limited fun factor.	Fulfillment at work.
Rigid, limited job descriptions.	Focus on talents and being qualities.
Employees are „forced“ to do certain things according to their job description and also have to do stuff they hate.	Employees responsibly choose to sign in for projects/tasks, which offered to everybody in a task pool.
Work in defined department structures (each employee belongs to one department).	Work is not limited to just one department.
TEAM = “Great another person does it.”	TEAM = Absolute responsibility of each project member.
Norms and rules determine the daily activities and decisions.	Creating of a movement.
Feedback once or twice a year in the “goal setting” or “goal review” meeting.	Feedback Culture „Rapid Learning“ in daily business.
Low Drama (e. g. being right)	High Drama
Top-down / Vertical communication.	Horizontal communication.
Managers in positions pass on determined goals.	<i>Edge Worker</i> as „space holder“ of visions and projects.
Motivation and incentives, to cheer up the employees.	Inspired employees who don't need extra motivation.
Employees are kept small and controllable.	Each employee is empowered.
Decision making based on hierarchy or majority.	Decision making based on „Systemic consensioning“.
Communication based on “power” and “being right”.	Relational communication.
Limited disclosure of information.	Total transparency of all information (including salaries).
Employees have to in the office during the so called „core working hours“.	Employees can flexibly decide where and when to work.



You think this is all a dream world and certainly not possible? Well, there is good news: It IS possible! The first companies already start heading for the new direction. It is possible to change even well established companies and guide them onto a new path. However, what is needed, are courageous pioneers, *Edge Workers* who are ready and willing to realize this vision and create a Next Culture Organization. It is not about starting tomorrow with the ultimate vision of employees coming and leaving the office whenever they want and defining the salaries themselves.

Creating a Next Culture Organization is a development process starting with the first step; the first step towards sustainability, inspiration, community and fulfilled employees who can unfold and fully bring in their talents and potential. Would it be worth working for such a Next Culture Organization? Are you ready to do the first step?

Best wishes,
Nicola Nagel

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