Organizational Frames

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Organizational Problem.

In my job for a tribal government we had an issue with our previous Tribal Administrator who acted as the head administrator for all operations, but answered to and took direction from the five board members who were elected. The issue that arose was the fact that the organization found out that the administrator was embezzling money from the tribe through inflated change orders on construction projects. Since this was discovered there have been huge changes, and good controls put into the accounting department to mitigate any chance of this reoccurring in the future. With all of the new safe guards in place there is still a huge void in the organization and it is uncertain as to what is needed in a new tribal administrator. Currently our attorney is working as an interim administrator to fill the void, but a fulltime administrator is greatly needed. The dilemma at hand is that the board has issues putting a person with legitimate control in the position, and on the other hand there are no qualified applicants that want that level of responsibility without ultimate authority.

In order to fix this problem, it must be rethought what this tribal administrator position is, and what it is responsible for. This must be done in order to successfully move the organization from its stagnant/unmotivated state and gain some proper leadership to move forward.

Rational Frame

Through this frame, there is a strong focus on roles, and formal ways of coordinating tasks throughout the organization. This process of organizational change has already taken place in my organization and is very much what is making the organization stagnant. The organization has been structured so that everything has a structure and every initiative has a path that needs to be followed in order to be done. I played a hand in establishing this and in doing so, job roles a very clear instructed and documented. The negative aspect of this is that without a proper leader, initiatives can take a long time to happen, due to lack of motivation. With this there is a certain level of uneasiness in the employees, as they are uncertain who their real boss is and whom they are responsible to. This is the aspect of the rational frames hierarchical structure that is missing and ultimately hurting the organization (Carey, 1999, p. 55).

Human Frame

In this frame, individuals needs are the main focus, and the optimal solution in this frame is to align individuals needs with those of the organization, In the transition from the previous tribal administrator to the current interim administrator, their seems to have been a switch in manager attitude from theory y to theory x. It seems that as time continues to progress, the current administrator is in over their head and naturally has a theory x outlook. This mentality is dripping down to the other employees within the organization, and a huge level of distrust and uneasiness is becoming more and more apparent throughout the organization. With the board being so far removed from most employees and the manager having a theory x outlook, the intrinsic needs of the employees are not being seen or met, thus an apparent dissatisfaction within employees is noticeable (Carey, 1999, p. 63).

Systems Frame

Often categorized as a system that is open and responds to the network of systems that it regulates. Systems frame seeks to connect the inner workings of an organization to the outside environment, thus creating a responsive and adaptive environment. As slow as the organization that I work for can be sometimes, there are still aspects throughout the organization that require immediate action in order to remedy some issue or pass a certain initiative in time. Due to the organizations rigid system, passing or getting anything done quickly is very difficult to do. I believe this is due to a lack of direction from leadership. Somehow the organization must be able to be complacent during the slow times, but be able to react and perform during the testing seemingly chaotic times. This is a test of leadership and requires the ability to manage at times and inspire and motivate in others (Carey, 1999, p. 70).

Political Frame

Through the political frame it is clear that being an effective manager is “minimizing the inconvenience” of getting things done, and controlling the organization through communication sharing (what is shared, with who its shared, and when its shared). The organization I work for seen through the political frame is very interesting and speaks to many of the issues throughout. As many of the different departments throughout the organization often have different issues and viewpoints it is clear that they all have a very different idea and perception of reality, or the bigger picture that leadership has envisioned. However powerful the political frame can be, this type of leadership is easily identified, and can lead to distrust within the organization and its leadership (Carey, 1999, p. 78).

Cultural Frame

Through the cultural frame, it is very much leadership who builds the vision or meaning for the organization. By exemplifying and relating this vision emphatically and often to employee it slowly becomes the shared vision throughout the organization. This can be seen as manipulative and takes a very charismatic leader to do so. While building a vision for an organization is key to success, the vision if preached to far can distort reality throughout the organization and become unhealthy (Carey, 1999, p. 86).

Integrating frames to resolve the problem

To resolve organizational problems, oppressive management that uses; control, prescription, conditioning, coercion, or control of consciousness must be changed. The issue that my organization has, is leaderships inability to see things at the same level as the employees and managers beneath them, while having a higher viewpoint and not getting entrenched into any of the five frames of perspective. Whether a leader does this and motivates the organization transactionally or transformationally depends on the individual and the setting. However the true goal is to be both transactional (as employees are exchanging their time for extrinsic benefits) and transformational, as leadership attempts to challenge employees to look at the organization from a higher level and pull their perspective further out from one of the five frames.

This is empowerment at its core, which is the first step that leadership must take to pull employees out of their stagnant frame of mind, find their voice and realize the gifts that they have to offer the organization. If leadership is able to do this effectively, collaboration and sharing must happen through the organization, this helps not just the individuals to grow, rather the entire organization. This growth throughout the organization all comes from the entire organization growing and collaborating through dialogue. This is what must happen in order to break the organization out of its cycle of being stagnant, lacking trust, and having fear (Carey, 1999, p. 103).

Whether this type of leadership comes from the board, or the administrator in my organization, it is critical for growth. Coming from the board and trickling down through the administrator would seem to be the most wholesome for the organization however. This wholesome type of leadership doesn’t just have effect on the organization, rather the individuals within them, and the worlds they live in.

Works Cited

Carey, M. R. (1999). *Heraclitean fire: Journeying on the path of leadership*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Pub.