Increasing Client Focus by Shifting the Approach

Ernest Bicknell

Department of Leadership Studies

Fort Hays State University

Author Note

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Paul Bicknell, Department of Leadership Studies, Fort Hays State University, Email: epbicknell@mail.fhsu.edu

Abstract

The focus organization has a long history of change and overcoming diversity and executed one of the most significant turnarounds in the information technology industry. While the organization is progressive and innovative, it has room for improvement. Discussed are the organization's purpose and a description of the assessment process.

Using the four frames from Bolman and Deal, the organization is viewed from different perspectives to understand better the rationale behind the manifestations of current processes and behaviors. Explicit connections exist between the presented leadership concepts and specific individuals in the organization.

Recommendations for improvements are presented in conclusion with the rationale to build strengths and rectify weaknesses. Several big and long changes are included within the recommendations, as are necessary leadership and process changes.

Keywords: Leadership Style, Change Model, Corporate Training, Client Mindset

Increasing Client Focus by Shifting the Approach

The selected organization resides within a multi-national corporation focused on Federal Government clients. The organization's mission is evident but is refocused every six to twelve months. The corporation leads the industry in meeting social needs and has often been ahead of social trends.

The environment is stable and predictable while being very complex and highly matrixed. Political coalitions are no better and no worse than those of its competitors. The organization primarily produces intellectual property and is a service provider, providing various services for our clients.

The organization maintains a good balance across the four frames. They have structural managers who are very detail-oriented, insisting on fact-based discussions. They have managers focused on human resource elements, holding town hall meetings, facilitating discussions where stories are shared, and fostering human bonds. Leaders do leverage political power to benefit clients and the organization, almost always in that order and rarely for personal gain. While the vision and mission are often moving targets, this organization's leadership is primarily consistent in its messaging and quality storytelling.

This organization does not appear guilty of the three common fallacies in explaining organizational problems described by Bolman and Deal (2017). They do not blame people, they do not blame the bureaucracy, and there is not an obvious thirst for power.

This organization operates in a highly competitive and government-regulated environment. Laws and regulations include CAS (Common Accounting Standards) and FAR (Federal Acquisition Regulation) for contracting and DoD standards (Department of Defense), FISMA (The Federal Information Security Modernization Act), and FedRAMP (Federal Risk and Authorization Management Program), to name a few laws and regulations that apply to the actual delivery of services.

The organization is monitored externally by the government and by third-party auditors. Internally, the organization is monitored by compliance and legal personnel. Being a publicly traded U.S. company, the organization must adhere to GAAP (Generally Accepted Accounting Principles) and is subject to SEC regulations.

The proposed changes target a specific subset of the group, about 25 people. The next phase targets the entire group of 150 people and can potentially impact the way the organization participates in the marketplace.

Table 1

Organizational Structure of the Sample Subgroup

Client Focus	**Client Management**	**Go to Market**	**Technical Support**
Multiple	Client Leader *Deepa*	Go to Market Leader *Shaan*	Technical Leader *Bart*
Client A	Client Executive *Sharon*	Go to Market Consultant *Ricardo*	Technical Architect *Ian*
Client B	Client Executive *Beth*	Go to Market Consultant *Percy*	Technical Architect *Kramer*

Note: While management reporting structures are vertical, client focus is horizontal. For example, the team of Sharon, Ricardo, and Ian focuses on Client A, while Beth, Percy, and Kramer focus on Client B, and the leaders focus on multiple clients and management duties.

Focusing on a specific part of the organization makes sense from a manageability perspective. If the initial change is successful, it can be adopted by other parts of the organization, which are similar in structure. High levels of autonomy in this highly matrixed environment make this a sound strategy to reduce resistance while increasing the adoption of the proposed changes across the organization.

Method

Assessment Process

Direct observation of organizational events and behavior was the primary method of assessment. From the employee's position in the organization, meeting participation and training events were highly observable as part of daily work. Organizational information was made available through internal access to documents and data, leveraged as permissible and as appropriate while retaining confidentiality and proprietary information. Both formal and informal conversations completed data collection for this paper.

A recent training program revealed a slight shift from a product-centric approach toward a client-centric approach. This training program provided insights into the organization and inspired thoughts of improvements and change. Facilitators seemingly haphazardly separated the participants into teams. The training would have been more effective if working groups were formed to build cohesion and alliances.

Drawing upon years of experience in the organization allows for an insider view of management and leadership. Outsiders may bring bias or may meet resistance when conducting interviews. Complex questions may be subject to social acceptance bias from the interviewee, which could result in less than forthcoming or guarded responses. Being mindful of bias, years of experience bring an unvarnished and honest perspective.

The focus of the Organizational Leadership program through the Department of Leadership Studies at Fort Hays State University sharpens observational senses, awakens awareness, increases frustration with organizational problems, and produces a wealth of perspective that was instrumental in the assessment requirements for this report.

Results

Four Frames Assessment

Structurally, much of the organizational focus is on meeting financial targets set by upper management. These are targets, which are short-term goals, differentiating them from long-term goals, which would be strategic. Beyond financial targets, the organization appears to split between sales goals (the needs of the company and the individual) and client goals (the clients' needs). It could be challenging to ascertain those who genuinely "put the client first" and those who are simply repeating a mantra. “Wegmans, a grocery store that perennially ranks high on *Fortune* magazine’s list of best places to work (number two in 2017), states its philosophy: “We set our goal to be the very best at serving the needs of our customers. Every action we take should be made with this in mind. We also believe that we can achieve our goal only if we fulfill the needs of our own people.” (Wegman’s 2016)” (Bolman & Deal, 2017). While, like Wegmans, the organization is focused on service the needs of clients, financial focus can take precedence, distracting from the primary mission.

From a human resources perspective, presenting the company as a single, unified entity is challenging for this and other organizations as the separate divisions require coordination roles, boundary spanning, and working knowledge across a sizeable technical portfolio. Organizations are separately responsible for selling either software, hardware, services, or any combination of the three. The same coordinating role approach that applies to the disparate organizations within the company also applies to the groups within the organization selected for analysis.

Groups within this organization are empowered to attain their assigned financial targets. Unfortunately, this autonomy does not always result in adherence to the ideas that ““Those who produce should share in the profits,” and “Treat others as you would be treated” (Kauffman, 1996, p. 40)” (Bolman & Deal, 2017). While the hierarchy is clearly defined, the roles are a little more flexible. Each of these groups operates semi-autonomously, with the freedom to work within a

semi-rigid structure. Ad-hoc teams may be formed to complete a specific project or set of related tasks, while client-focused teams enjoy increased permanence. Outcomes are highly regarded as a measure of performance, where daily activities are only tracked due to regulations. Evaluations of both the group and the individual are based on several factors, including financial targets, personal growth, corporate community contributions, and results delivered for clients. In a cautionary tale, “Owen tried to convince fellow capitalists that investing in people could produce a greater return that investments in machinery. But the business world dismissed him as a wild radical whose ideas would harm the people he wanted to help (O’Toole, 1995)” (Bolman & Deal, 2017). Leadership would be wise to consider that “many highly successful organizations have gone in another direction: investing in people on the premise that a highly motivated and skilled workforce is a powerful competitive advantage” (Bolman & Deal, 2017). An investment in employees is an investment in the client. Bolman and Deal (2017) recount a story of a team of factory workers incentivized based upon their production. When their production increased, their compensation followed in kind. Unfortunately, this incentive plan resulted in a disparity of pay between this team and other workers in the factory. The other workers complained, citing a lack of fairness. Management responded by reverting the team back to their original compensation program, and the team quit. The compensation structure must be fair and just. Behaviors, both good and bad, will be driven by evaluation and compensation policies.

The agenda is the roadmap for the organization. "Regardless of the role you are in, the first step in effective political leadership is setting an agenda" (Bolman & Deal, 2017). Setting an agenda must involve both leaders and followers. Bolman and Deal put forth that a central idea of the political frame is the emergence of goals “out of a bargaining process among coalition members” (2017). Though shared, organizational power is neither highly concentrated with everything being tightly regulated, nor is power diffused with loose system controls. In some ways, the organization leans towards underbounded as great power is realized by individuals who are in

charge of their own business interactions with clients. In other ways, the organization leans towards over bounded as it has to follow a strict approval process with authority to approve or reject work resting clearly with senior management who possesses position power. When the organization operates as underbounded, creativity and entrepreneurship are encouraged. Due to their direct client relationships, client leads exercise access and control of agendas power and are allowed the freedom to solve client problems with minimal oversight. "If partisans are convinced that existing authorities are too evil or incompetent to continue, they will risk trying to wrest control – unless they regard the authorities as too formidable. Conversely, if partisans trust authority and see it as legitimate, they will accept and support it in the event of an attack (Gamson, 1968; Baldridge 1971). In almost any instance of unrest or revolution, there is a sharp cleavage between rebels and loyalists" (Bolman & Deal, 2017). Overall direction comes from a central mission and vision for the business division. When the organization operates as overbounded, it can seem restrictive and cumbersome. However, the processes are necessary due to fiduciary responsibility and compliance requirements. Operating alongside client leads are technical resources called architects. The architects who have earned the title "Distinguished Engineer" hold the same information and expertise power as other architects, but with additional reputation power that comes from a well-respected, official recognition of their technical prowess. Key symbols of power often manifest as displays of technical knowledge, discussion of working relationships with important clients, and sharing of insider knowledge gained from close relationships with senior management.

Networks and coalitions form around the client leads as they are the gatekeepers of the clients. The client leads derive power through their generation of revenue from business transactions with clients. These customer-centric coalitions can become small ecosystems operating within the larger ecosystem of the organization. While resources are mostly separated, that is focused on individual groups of clients; shared resources are not often in contention as the esprit de corps is strong within the organization. Both management and individual contributors operate in

coordinating roles performing boundary spanning, acting as the glue between the client-centric groups. As a high-performing team, the majority of the organization could be considered part of the in-group with few who could be considered in the out-group. Leaders work with groups and with individual followers operating in phase 3 mature partnerships. Leaders and followers maintain mutual purposes in pursuing a common goal, which is focused on meeting client needs. Senior management consistently displays respect for the individual and ethical leadership that has built a healthy community within the organization.

From a symbolic perspective, most of the architecture is old. Large office buildings and campuses were designed and built in the 1950s through the 1970s. There exists an aura of several great people who have passed through the corridors. Long hallways are dotted with modern and historical artifacts and messaging with the imagery of the past combined with a vision of the future. “Distilled to the essence, people seek meaning in life. Because life is mysterious, symbols arise to sustain hope, belief, and faith. They express themselves in analogies. Symbols are a metaphoric expression of psychic energy. Their content is far from obvious; it is expressed in unique and individual ways while embodying universal and collective imagery (Ghareman, 2016)” (Bolman & Deal, 2017). Parking lots are massive, and spaces are abundant. Before COVID, the spaces inside and outside were seldom close to capacity. Blue jeans and polo shirts are most common amongst lower-level employees. Slacks and the occasional suit can be found amongst the upper-level employees. Ties are generally only seen when clients visit or when employees visit client sites. There is energy amongst the teams, both in person and virtually or remotely. There is a buzz of innovation and a can-do attitude. Innovation and invention have been at the company's heart since its inception around the turn of the last century. The patent process is well-known, and many employees hold multiple patents. Over the decades, the company has been through many cultural shifts. While always progressive socially, what was once known as a very formal work

environment has become more casual. What was once a very structured organization has become highly matrixed.

The company has had several great leaders, including a master of reconstruction. Leaders operate more as a loose confederation than as a top-down, highly structured organization in the currently matrixed environment. Storytelling is a crucial form of communication and is highly valued. The most effective leaders can tell stories while building networks of their peers. Recognition and rewards are well promoted, although not always consistent and not always down to the individual or team levels. Subcultures are codified around business resource groups, which bring together "birds of a feather" on topics from race to racing. Some are cohesive, while others flirt with being divisive. While the culture is work hard, the play hard is mainly left to the individual. Some company events, like annual picnics, have been organized, but without great regularity. Virtual happy hours have been attempted and have been successful in the short term. Leaders of each group are free to approach these and other topics with their teams differently and individually. While there is a lack of cohesiveness, there is an abundance of latitude.

Leadership Capacities

It is agreed that leadership must start with an agenda, moving quickly to a plan. Simply, “a plan is decoration displayed conspicuously and with pride. A strategic plan carries even higher status” (Bolman & Deal, 2017). Some legacy leadership may subscribe to the older notions, such as one where “Mann suggested that certain traits could be used to distinguish leaders from non-leaders. His results identified leaders as strong in the following six traits: intelligence, masculinity, adjustment, dominance, extraversion, and conservatism” (Northouse, 2021). Business has shifted away from these trait-based assertations as “people who possess certain leader traits that make them leaders in one situation may not be leaders in another situation. Some people may have the traits that help them emerge as leaders but not the traits that allow them to maintain their leadership over time. In other words, the situation influences leadership” (Northouse, 2021). While

the trait theory still applies, “the trait approach is weak in describing how leaders’ traits affect the outcomes of groups and teams in organizational settings” (Northouse, 2021). The leadership of this organization tends to embrace the new, with the pockets of the old philosophies and methodologies fading over time.

The leadership team of Deepa, Shaan, and Bart all tend to blur the line between management and leadership. Shaan struggles the most with differentiating between the two, while Deepa and Bart seem to understand that “to *manage* means to accomplish activities and master routines, whereas to *lead* means to influence others and created visions for change” (Northouse, 2021). Ricardo and Percy have expressed to Beth and Sharon the distinction made clear by Bennis and Nanus in their frequently quoted sentence, “Managers are people who do things right and leaders are people who do the right thing” (Northouse, 2021). The team overall, Ian and Kramer included, display a basic understanding that “management is about seeking order and stability; leadership is about seeking adaptive and constructive change” (Northouse, 2021). All three of the leaders in this team lead by example, acknowledging that ““Leaders are…expected to work harder than those who report to them and always make sure that their needs are taken care of before yours, thus leading by example,” he said (Jackson, 2017)” (Northouse, 2021).

Across the organization, ethical training is mandatory. “Consistent with Aristotle, current advocates of virtue-based theory stress that more attention should be given to the development and training of moral values (Velasquez, 1992)” (Northouse, 2021). The importance of ethics goes beyond the training. “In short, ethics is central to leadership because of the nature of the process of influence, the need to engage followers in accomplishing mutual goals, and the impact leaders have on the organization’s values” (Northouse, 2021). The organization does a great job living the principles of ethical leadership where they consistently “provide a foundation for the development of sound ethical leadership [and include] respect, service, justice, honesty, and community” (Northouse, 2021). Leadership understands genuine “concern for production refers to how a leader

is concerned with achieving organizational tasks…Concern for people refers to how a leader attends to the people in the organization who are trying to achieve its goals" (Northouse, 2021). When the Leadership (Managerial) Grid is applied to the management team, they appear as Middle-of-the-Road Management, which is a good balance of morale and production.

Most of the upper management are highly educated, and most have technical and project management backgrounds. New managers are evaluated and valued for project management skills. Industry certifications and technical work experience hold more importance for front-line roles. Owner-operators are supported and encouraged by the autonomous operation of the groups within the organization. Each group leader is free to bring their unique leadership style. Some reflect the style, and all reinforce the organizational leader's financial targets.

Getting to know one's coworkers makes the work environment a little more friendly. It can also introduce unprofessional elements into the work environment. The current trend seems to seek to remove the boundary between personal and professional entirely. Employee resource groups (ERGs) foster this notion by grouping employees together based on a concept of commonality of its members. Some of these ERGs have the power to influence corporate policy and programs. It appears we are at the front of a period where the boundary between personal and professional is moving, if not completely eroding.

The management works to foster more personal interactions by hosting monthly "virtual happy hour" meetings. These informal gatherings reveal a more personable side of management and staff, sometimes easing tensions from work conflicts or stressors. Combined with quality training and up-skilling opportunities, this organization has a healthy focus and appears to value the individual

greatly.

One of the leaders was recently inspired by an article touting the benefit of "being fierce" in competition. Unfortunately, he was not prepared for the backlash. "Leaders need confidence to

confront gnarly problems and deep divisions. They must expect conflict, knowing their actions may unleash forces beyond their control" (Bolman & Deal, 2017). He doubled down on his sports analogy, still feeling personal excitement about "being fierce" and "leaving it all on the court". The team did not respond well to either analogy as it simply did not resonate with the nature of the organization's work. "McCall, Lombardo, and Morrison (1988, p.122) found that a key quality among successful executives was they were great learners, displaying an "extraordinary tenacity in extracting something worthwhile from their experience and in seeking experiences rich in opportunities for growth"" (Bolman & Deal, 2017). There was some learning to be had that day, and the debrief is still pending. Bolman and Deal found that of the fallacies in explaining organizational problems, the "first and most common is blaming people. This approach casts every failure as a product of individual blunders" (2017). It is vital that "autonomous, self-managing teams have both the knowledge and the motivation to solve problems and find opportunities. Information transparency and periodic reviews ensure that teams have benchmarks to assess how well they are doing and where they could or should be able to improve. Contrast that with top-down approaches that train employees to hide problems and wait for orders from above, and it is easy to see how strong, self-managing teams can produce many benefits for customer service and business success" (Bolman & Deal, 2017). The opposite can be true when micromanaged or managed with an inappropriate leadership style. Leaders must make sure their words match their actions. Trouble will follow when there is a mismatch between espoused theory and theory-in-use. "Espoused theories are accounts individuals provide whenever they try to describe, explain, or predict their behavior. Theories-in-use guide what people actually do. A theory-in-use is an implicit program or set of rules that specifies how to behave" (Bolman & Deal, 2017). Words and ideas must be considered carefully and communicated clearly. Effective leadership is dependent upon clear messaging.

The organization's leadership has done an excellent job getting the right people on the team (or the bus). Jim Collins shares his findings where “the executives who ignited the transformations from good to great did not first figure out where to drive the bus and then get people to take it there. No, they *first* got the right people on the bus (and the wrong people off the bus) and *then* figured out where to drive it” (2001). Regarding the success of Southwest Airlines, Northouse reports that “The company hired employees for their touchy-feely attitudes and trained them for skill” (2021). The evidence from Jim Collins' studies and Herb's approach to building Southwest airlines prove that assembling the right team is critical to the organization's success.

Discussion

Recommendations for Improvement

Bolman and Deal suggest an examination of familiar processes through the four lenses as "any event can be framed in different ways and serve multiple purposes." (2017). The structural frame can be applied during strategic planning to coordinate resources while impacting decision-making to produce correct decisions. The human resources frame can facilitate activities to promote participation and build support during strategic planning, produce commitment during decision making, improve balance during reorganizing, and solicit feedback while evaluating. The political frame can help to form new coalitions through reorganization. The symbolic frame can enable value confirmation while providing opportunities for bonding through role-playing and shared rituals.

From the perspective of the structural frame, improvements to the process will include process improvements designed to encourage cross-team cohesion. It balances structure and freedom, order and chaos, and process and creativity. Creativity and freedom are highly regarded and devolve into chaos if entirely unchecked. Structure and process are part of the institutional nature of the organization, bringing order and sometimes stifling freedom and creativity. “Art Fry, the inventor of the Post-it, agreed: “We all came to the conclusion that there was no way in the

world that anything like a Post-it note would ever emerge from this new system" (Hindo, 2007, p. 9)." (Bolman & Deal, 2017). It will be essential to leave the organization's creativity and freedoms intact while changing the structural frame. This may be the most challenging of the proposed changes recommended as it will be large. Shifting from product-focus sales to client-needs sales will require the support of upper management as incentive and compensation plans drive behavior. Unless management changes how salespeople are compensated, the current behavior will not change.

The current sales management approach directs the organization's energy toward financial targets and forecasting. With a keen focus on meeting financial goals and ensuring the accuracy of the sales pipeline, not enough energy is directed toward how the attainment of the goals and the validity of the forecasts could be improved. When numbers are of high importance, the end can justify the means. Employment and employee success is predicated on making revenue in a for-profit company, so it makes sense when financial focus prevails. Unfortunately, this can result in chasing opportunities not within the organization's core competencies. The organization loses focus on what it does well, trying to capture revenue from riskier opportunities. Improved client intimacy does not mean knowing what products to sell but rather knowing upon which clients to best focus sales energies. The improved approach focuses on the client's mission and the client's revenues or success. When the client is successful, the organizations' success will follow. Forecasting will remain important and will be made more accurate through improved understanding and client communications, representing another large change in the structural frame.

The organization's heart is best viewed through the human resources frame. Great teams do not emerge overnight, and they do not form by accident. ""In the field of group endeavor, you will see incredible events in which the group performs far beyond the sum of its individual talents. It happens in the symphony, in the ballet, in the theater, in sports, and equally in business. It is easy to

recognize and impossible to define. It is a mystique. It cannot be achieved without immense effort, training, and cooperation, but effort, training, and cooperation alone rarely create it."" (Bolman & Deal, 2017). ""All Great Groups [sic] believe that they are in a mission from God, that they could change the world, make a dent in the universe. They are obsessed with their work. It becomes not a job but a fervent quest. That belief is what brings the necessary cohesion and energy to their work" (p. 1)" (Bolman & Deal, 2017). In the lead of a high-performing team is an individual who may or may not be the team's designated leader. They are, however, the person who embodies the heart of the group, who exudes the mission and values. "Every group or organization has a "priest" or "priestess" who ministers to spiritual needs" (Bolman & Deal, 2017). This spiritual leader leads by example and represents the organization to outside organizations when performing boundary-spanning networking. "Coordinating roles or groups use persuasion and negotiation to help dovetail the efforts of different units. They are boundary spanners with diplomatic status who are artful in dealing across specialized turfs." (Bolman & Deal, 2017). It is vital to identify and empower these individuals, instilling the right messaging to reflect the organization's core values and mission. Improving the team in this manner is a long-term change, as it requires a coordinated effort of the followers, specifically designed training to foster team cohesion and the cooperation of the followers in their adoption of the programmatic changes. "Groups, like modern art, are complex and subtle" (Bolman & Deal, 2017). It will take a concerted effort over a longer period for the team to develop into a high-performing team.

Team sizes of three to six are recommended for both the federal training sessions and the working groups following the training. "High performing teams are of manageable size. Katzenbach and Smith fix the optimal size for an effective team somewhere between two and twenty-five people" (Bolman & Deal, 2017). Hackman narrows team size down more specifically and experientially by saying that "a team cannot have more than six members. Even a six-person team has fifteen pairs among members, but a seven-person team has twenty-one, and the difference

in how well groups of the two sizes operate is noticeable" (2002). The team must be supported by leadership and made to feel safe. "Teams with better psychological safety learned better, and teams that learned better performed better." (Bolman & Deal, 2017). Once the team has achieved beyond the performing stage to become a high-performing team, the manager's burden will be reduced as "members of high-performing teams hold themselves collectively accountable" (Bolman & Deal, 2017). Achieving this high-performing team will take time, effort, and dedication from leaders and followers.

Shifting to the political frame, Bolman and Deal share that "many managers tend to think that they can design goods and services and then create demand. The marketing concept denies this proposition. Instead, the marketing concept emphasizes that the creative aspect of marketing is discovering, defining, and fulfilling what people want or need or what solves their life-style problems (Marshall, 1984, p. 1)." (2017). When the marketing concept is appropriately applied, management can empower the team by providing the right goods and services for the clients and right tools for their followers to do the job. Bolman and Deal propose that "the right tool makes a job easier; the wrong one gets in the way. Tools thus become useful only when a situation is sized up accurately" (2017). More tools are not necessarily better if the tools become a burden. "There are good rules and bad ones. Formal structure enhances morale if it helps us get our work done. It has a negative impact if it gets in our way, buries us in red tape, or makes it too easy for management to control us" (Bolman & Deal, 2017). "Doubt your infallibility. This was the advice that Benjamin Franklin offered his fellow delegates to the U.S. constitutional convention in 1787: "Having lived long, I have experienced many instances of being obliged by better information, or fuller consideration, to change opinions even on important subjects, which I once thought right, but found to be otherwise…"" (Bolman & Deal, 2017). A good leader can admit when they are wrong and can earn the respect of their followers by admitting to weaknesses. To build further trust, a good leader knows to "take good care of your employees and they'll take good care of your

customers" (Bolman & Deal, 2017). This sentiment is behind the success of Zappos, Wegmans, and other organizations.

Grounding in the symbolic frame, Bolman and Deal propose "that the essence of leadership is not vision but mobilizing followers to work on solving hard problems" (2017). A leader must apply the most appropriate leadership style for the situation to mobilize followers. "Leadership style consists of the behavior pattern of a person who attempts to influence others." (Northouse, 2021). Applying the SLII Model to EDGE method combined with the stages of team development can assist a leader to assess the team's current needs. Firstly, we map the four stages of team development to the explain, demonstrate, guide, and enable (EDGE) method. When a team is forming, the leader explains and directs, applying high directive and low supportive behavior. When a team is storming, the leader demonstrates and coaches, applying highly directive and supportive behavior. When a team is norming, the leader guides and supports, applying high supportive and low directive behavior. When a team is performing, the leader enables through delegation, applying low supportive and low directive behavior. "The approach stresses that leaders need to find out about their followers' needs and then adapt their leadership style accordingly. Leaders cannot lead using a single style: They must be willing to change their style to meet the requirements of the situation. This approach recognizes that followers act differently when working toward different goals, and that they may act differently during different stages of achieving the same goal. Effective leaders are those who can change their own style based on the goal requirements and the followers' needs, even in the middle of a project." (Northouse, 2021). Of course, the leader will communicate style changes as they are being made, based on the stage of the team as it progresses and regresses through the stages. "Without constant feedback from followers, the shifting of leader behavior among directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented behaviors may be viewed as inconsistent and confusing by followers." (Northouse, 2021). This underscores the importance of two-way communication between leaders and followers when the

leader is shifting styles based on the team's current needs. Changes in the symbolic frame can bring long-term changes to the vision and mission, requiring negotiation and collaboration between leaders and followers.

Group autonomy is highly regarded and is critical to retain throughout any proposed changes. “Volmer, Spurk, and Niessen (2012) investigated the role of job autonomy in the relationship between the leader-member exchange and creativity of followers. Their study of a high-technology firm found that greater autonomy increased the positive relationship between the leader-member exchange and creativity at work” (Northouse, 2021). Once teams have reached the pinnacle of performance, leadership needs to know how to support them. “Laozi viewed leaders as being servants *and* followers. “The more one serves, the more one leads. Leadership, first, means follower-ship or service-ship just like water. Second, leadership means non-intrusiveness or non-interference” (Lee et al., 2008, p. 91).” (Northouse, 2021). Servant leadership works well when the situation is right. Regarding servant leadership, Northouse identifies “the seven behaviors of leaders that foster servant leadership: conceptualizing, emotional healing, putting followers first, helping followers grow and succeed, behaving ethically, empowering, and creating value for the community” (2021). Leaders must express genuine concern for their teams. It cannot be faked. “Good leaders care deeply about their work and the people who do it and are doggedly persistent in pushing the cause forward” (Bolman & Deal, 2017). The proposed training includes additional training for leaders. “Servant leadership works best when leaders are altruistic and have a strong motivation and deep-seated interest in helping others” (Northouse, 2021). Leaders must not only serve their followers, but they must also motivate them. “Rather than *serving leaders*, Chaleff argues that followers *serve a common purpose along with leaders*…and that both leaders and followers work to achieve common outcomes. Chaleff states that followers need to take a more proactive role that brings it into parity with the leader’s role. He sought to make followers more responsible, to change their own internal estimates of their abilities to influence others, and to help

followers feel a greater sense of agency" (Northouse, 2021). Training and educating leadership styles and when best to apply them represents a long-term change with political implications.

With change comes resistance. Fear, uncertainty, and doubt will take the place of factual information in its absence. "Failure to anticipate how changes in principal's duties might affect teachers and impinge on existing agreements about authority produced pushback" (Bolman & Deal, 2017). Professor Goertzen talked about pushback and resistance to change in one of his lectures. This kind of pushback is not dissimilar to the nonconcur process Lou Gerstner encountered in his efforts at IBM. (2002). Pushback is a real problem that must be addressed directly and with authority. "In these settings, path-goal theory suggests that it is the leader's responsibility to help followers by removing these obstacles or helping the followers to navigate around them" (Northouse, 2021). Removing obstacles can be made easier by adopting a common set of ideas and a common vocabulary. "Tests like Meyers-Briggs provide a shared framework and language" (Bolman & Deal, 2017). In addition, "a common goal requires that the leader and followers agree on the direction to be taken by the group. Leaders need to take into account their own and followers' purposes while working toward goals that are suitable for both of them. This factor, concern for others, is the distinctive features that delineates *authentic* transformational leaders from *pseudo*transformational leaders…Concern for the common good means that leaders cannot impose their will on others. They need to search for goals that are compatible with everyone" (Northouse, 2021). The team must be part of setting the goals as a sense of ownership will improve the adoption of a big change.

The proposed federal training program is more than just the commercial training program recast for the purposed of the federal organization. The federal training program framework includes team building, culture enhancements, cohesion impacts, shift to client-focus (away from product focus), the notion that everyone consults, everyone sells, and a "match the hatch" approach to ensure focus on client needs.

Bolman and Deal point out that “life’s daily challenges rarely arrive clearly labeled or neatly packaged. Instead that come upon us in a murky, turbulent, and unrelenting flood. The art of reframing uses knowledge and intuition to read the flow and to find sensible and effective ways to channel the incoming tide” (2017). Reframing is a valuable method of looking at scenarios through different lenses to make sense of what may have appeared nonsensical. “A straightforward was to do that is to examine the situation one frame at a time, asking two simple questions: From this perspective, what’s going on? And what options does this new view suggest? This reflective process deserves ample time and careful thought. It requires “going to the balcony” (see Heifetz, 1994)” (Bolman & Deal, 2017). It is remarkable how much clarity one can gain by simply taking a step back to see the bigger picture from a new angle. “Reframing, like management and leadership, is more art than science. Every artist brings a distinctive vision and produces multiple works” (Bolman & Deal, 2017). Part art, part science, applying frames to understand better organizations is a highly valuable tool by which “a cluttered jumble of impressions and experiences gradually evolves into a manageable image” (Bolman & Deal, 2017). The analogy of “Eating an elephant” is designed to indicate that anything is possible if it is broken into smaller manageable pieces. The reframing process helps determine if the subject is an elephant or a rhinoceros to identify the problem before determining the appropriate solution.

Ethical leadership is long-term sustainable leadership. “Good managers and leaders sustain a tension-filled poise between extremes. They combine core values with elastic strategies” (Bolman & Deal, 2017). Long-term leadership understands and lives ethically. ““Visionary” companies have the paradoxical capacity to stimulate change and pursue high-risk new ventures while simultaneously maintaining their commitment to core ideology and values” (Bolman & Deal, 2017). Most long-term companies have undergone significant changes over time while remaining true to their core values.

In conclusion, the change our organization needs to make is one where we place increased focus on the client and the client's needs. This begins with understanding the client, seeing their problems from their perspective. Asking questions of the client will improve this understanding while helping to frame their problems. If a solution is available, it should be recommended. If a solution is not available, good faith would suggest exchanging ideas while disengaging from the pursuit process, reverting to non-solution-specific relationship building. The planned federal-focused training is a mechanism to effect this change, simply a vehicle. The organization's mission and values will be made clear through this training while team cohesion is improved through team exercises. Alliances will be forged, and trust will be increased. Leadership's attention to the specific needs of the followers will ease the transition from a product-centric approach to a client-centric approach.

References

Bolman, L. G., & Deal, T. E. (2017). *Reframing Organizations: Artistry, Choice, and Leadership* (6th ed.). Jossey-Bass.

Collins, J. (2001). *Good to Great. Why Some Companies Make the Leap… and Others Don't.* HarperCollins.

Gerstner, L. (2002). *Who Says Elephants Can't Dance? Inside IBM's Historic Turn Around.* HarperCollins Publishers Ltd.

Hackman, R. J. (2002). *Leading Teams: Setting the Stage for Great Performances.* Harvard Business Review Press.

Northouse, P. G. (2021). *Leadership: Theory and Practice* (9th ed.). SAGE Publications, Inc.

Organizational Assessment Report Grading Rubric

Criteria	Novice	Apprentice	Proficient	Distinguished
Organizational Overview *20 pts*	Unclear or absent description of the organization; Few or no supporting details—vague content	Identifiable description of the organization; Some supporting details –needs to be more specific; Little reader interest	Clear, description of the organization; Adequate supporting details; Some reader interest	Clear description of the organization; Rich with specific details; Strong reader interest
Assessment Process *20 pts*	Little to no explanation of the assessment process, or links to the purpose of the report.	Some, brief explanation of the assessment process, but fails to link the process to the purpose of the report.	A good, basic explanation of the assessment process, and its links to the purpose of the report.	Clear, detailed explanation of the assessment process, and its links to the purpose of the report.
Four Frames Assessment : Strengths & Weaknesses *40 pts*	Unclear or absent strengths and weaknesses of the four frames; Few or no supporting details—vague content; Little or no understanding of the theory as it relates to the strengths or weaknesses; No alternative perspectives are identified.	Identifiable strengths and weaknesses of the four frames; Some supporting details—needs to be more specific; Basic understanding of the theory and the strengths and weaknesses; Predictable, unoriginal ideas; little to no sources referenced for support. Alternative perspectives are identified, but with little detail.	Clear, well-chosen strengths and weaknesses of the four frames; Adequate supporting details; Clear understanding of the theory and the strengths and weaknesses; Some original ideas, supported by credible and relevant sources. Alternative perspectives are clearly identified.	*Clear, well-chosen strengths and weaknesses of the four frames*; Rich with specific and relevant details that support and develop the thesis; Clear understanding of the theory and the strengths and weaknesses; Many original ideas, supported by credible and relevant sources. Alternative perspectives are identified, discussed, and carefully considered.

Leadership Assessment: Strengths & Weaknesses *40 pts*	Unclear or absent strengths and weaknesses of the leadership analysis; Few or no supporting details—vague content; Little or no understanding of the theory as it relates to the strengths or weaknesses; No alternative perspectives are identified.	Identifiable strengths and weaknesses of the leadership analysis; Some supporting details—needs to be more specific; Basic understanding of the theory and the strengths and weaknesses; Predictable, unoriginal ideas; little to no sources referenced for support. Alternative perspectives are identified, but with little detail.	Clear, well-chosen strengths and weaknesses of the leadership analysis; Adequate supporting details; Clear understanding of the theory and the strengths and weaknesses; Some original ideas, supported by credible and relevant sources. Alternative perspectives are clearly identified.	*Clear, well-chosen strengths and weaknesses of the leadership analysis*; Rich with specific and relevant details that support and develop the thesis; Clear understanding of the theory and the strengths and weaknesses; Many original ideas, supported by credible and relevant sources. Alternative perspectives are identified, discussed, and carefully considered.
Recommendations for Improvement: Identification *30 pts*	Unclear or absent recommendations; Few or no supporting details—vague content; Little or no understanding of connections between four frames and leadership assessment and organizational improvement. Recommendations are not supported by relevant and credible sources.	Identifiable improvement plan; Some supporting details—needs to be more specific; Basic understanding of the connections between four frames and leadership assessment strengths/weaknesses and organizational improvement plan. Few recommendations supported by relevant and credible sources.	Clear, well-chosen improvement plan; Adequate supporting details; Most of the improvement plan describes the connections between four frames and leadership assessment strengths/weaknesses and organizational improvement plan. Recommendations supported by relevant and credible sources, but could use more detail.	Clear, well-chosen improvement plan; Rich with specific and relevant details that support and develop the improvement plan; *Clear understanding of the connections between four frames and leadership assessment strengths/weaknesses and organizational improvement plan.* Recommendations supported by relevant and credible sources.

Recommendations for Improvement: Change Processes *30 pts*	Unclear or absent explanation of how to implement recommended changes for improvement; Few or no supporting details—vague content.	Identifiable explanation of how to implement identified changes for improvement. Some supporting details—needs to be more specific.	Developed explanation of how to implement identified changes; adequate supporting details from relevant and credible sources.	Clear, *well-developed explanation of how to implement* identified changes for improvement; Rich with specific and relevant details, supported by relevant and credible sources.
Writing Quality *20 pts*	Considerable difficulty expressing ideas or descriptions clearly. Many grammatical, syntactical, and spelling errors. Document is unorganized; writer "bounces" between topics; no headings used. Sources are not documented within the text or on a reference page.	Difficulty expressing ideas, feelings or descriptions. Needs to work on grammar, spelling, etc. Document does not contain headings, so it is difficult to follow the organization of the paper. Sources are listed on a reference page, but not within the text of the report.	Good writing style with solid ability to convey meaning. Few grammar, syntax and spelling errors. Document is well-organized, but headings are vague. Sources are documented within the text and on a reference page, with a few minor errors.	Strong style with clear ability to express thoughts and point of view. Excellent grammar, syntax, spelling, etc. Document is well-organized with appropriate headings. Sources are documented within the text and on a reference page, and are error-free.

Criteria	Possible Pts	Your Pts
Org Overview	**20**	17
Assessment Process	**20**	19
Four Frames Assessment: Strengths & Weaknesses	**40**	37.5
Leadership Assessment: Strengths & Weaknesses	**40**	37.5
Recommendations for Improvement: Identification	**30**	28
Recommendations for Improvement: Change Processes	**30**	28
Writing Quality	**20**	19
Total	**200**	186