



Mainstreaming Evaluation into Organisational Culture

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Overview

- What would an 'evaluating organisation' look like?
- Can organisations be 'intelligent'?
- The three levels of 'learning culture'
 - Formal policies, systems, & practices
 - Informal practices & symbolic actions
 - Evaluative beliefs, values, & attitudes
- Strategies for mainstreaming evaluation
 - Lessons from best practice in organisational culture change

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What would an 'evaluating organisation' look like?

- What would it look like in an organisation if evaluation was 'mainstreamed' into the organisation's culture?

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Can organisations be 'intelligent'?

- What characterises someone who is 'smart'?
- Intelligent individuals:
 - Have sharper perceptive 'antennae' → they notice things more quickly
 - Can spot patterns and make insightful inferences
 - Learn quickly from their own and others' successes and failures
- Organisations can be like this too – and evaluation can help them get there



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Intelligence = learning capacity

- Intelligent people \neq intelligent organisations; the whole can be greater or less than the sum of its parts
- The characteristics of 'intelligent' organisations are very prevalent in descriptions of 'learning organisations'
- So, what can be done to enhance an organisation's learning capacity, to make it more intelligent?

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What are learning organisations?

Learning organisations ...

- Create useful knowledge
- Disseminate it effectively within the organisation
- Use this knowledge to improve organisational effectiveness

As a result, they ...

- Are better able to anticipate change
- Respond/adapt more quickly to change
- Perform better and survive longer than organisations that do not learn so well

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What makes a learning-enabled culture?

Senge's five 'disciplines'

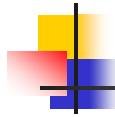
1. High-Performance Culture
2. Challenging Assumptions
3. Shared Vision & Intuition
4. Team Learning & Communication
5. Systems & Nonlinear Thinking

Plus ...

6. External & Future Scanning
7. Innovation & Experimentation
8. Systematic Evaluation

Interestingly, evaluation is infused throughout these ...

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High-Performance Culture

(a.k.a. "Personal Mastery" – Senge)

High, Inspiring Goals



Creative Tension

Reality About Current Performance

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High-Performance Culture

Definition

- Maintaining the creative tension between 'personal vision' (ambitious, meaningful goals), and the truth about current performance (DiBella & Nevis, 1998; Sathe, 2000; Senge, 1990).

Elements

- Pursuit and attainment of high, inspiring goals
- *Relentless pursuit of the truth about one's own performance*
- *Shared understanding of the true gap between current and desired performance*

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Challenging Assumptions

(a.k.a. Mental Models)

Definition

- Challenging and testing deeply ingrained assumptions (Senge, 1990), theories-in-use (Argyris, 1993), and 'sacred cows' (Sathe, 2000).

Elements

- *Diversity of thought and criticism truly valued*
- No 'sacred cows' (undiscussables)
- Strong sense of trust (e.g., *safe to criticize*)

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Shared Vision & Intuition

Definition

- Sense of shared purpose (Senge, 1990), shared identity and organizational persona (de Geus, 1997).

Elements

- Shared vision (*aspired end-state/outcomes*) – and genuine commitment to it
- Long-term commitment to organisation/sense of community and shared identity
- People exercise own good judgment and common sense in work

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Team Learning & Communication

Definition

- Team dialogue (Argyris, 1992), 'synergy' (spontaneous, coordinated action; Senge, 1990); knowledge creation/sharing (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995).

Elements

- Team synergy/intelligence
- True dialogue used; few 'defensive routines'
- *Good cross-project communication (e.g. about what's working well, what's not)*

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Systems & Nonlinear Thinking

Definition

- Understanding interdependence among units (DiBella & Nevis, 1998); seeing causal loops (Senge, 1990).

Elements

- Understanding interdependence of different parts of the organisation
- Looking for systemic causes of problems, and causal loops [*Note the relevance of systems-based approaches to needs assessment and evaluation*]

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External & Future Scanning

Definition

- Scanning the external environment (DiBella & Nevis, 1998); creating 'memories of the future' (De Geus, 1997); embracing continuous change.

Elements

- Awareness of the external environment [*Note the role of comparisons in evaluation*]
- Awareness of possible changes in the future
- Change/improvement seen as a natural part of organisational life

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Innovation & Experimentation

Definition

- Constant generation of and experimentation with new ideas and methods (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Brown & Eisenhardt, 1997).

Elements

- Support for risk-taking
- Diversity of practice (variety of methods in existence)
- 'Marketplace for ideas'
- *Streamlining and constant improvement*

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Evaluation of Successes & Failures

Definition

- State-of-the-art, systematic evaluation of methods, products, personnel, policies, and programmes (Sathe & Davidson, 2000; Scriven, 1991).

Elements

- *True value focus in personnel evaluation*
- *Flexible use of goals*
- *Use of multiple perspectives*
- *Finger on the pulse of customer needs*
- *Benchmarking quality against competitors, best practice*

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Building a 'Learning Culture'

- What are the leverage points where evaluation systems, evaluation practice and evaluative thinking can help enhance organisational learning capacity?
- To identify these, we need to understand that organisational culture has many levels and layers ...

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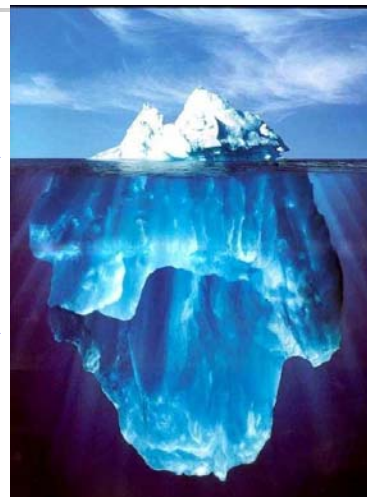


The 'Learning Culture' Iceberg

Formal policies, systems
& practices

Informal practices &
symbolic actions

Beliefs, values & attitudes



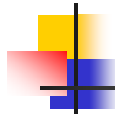
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Changing organisational culture

- Consider all three levels of organisational culture
- Define what success might look like at each of those levels (that's how we know what we're aiming for)
- Focus on 'mindshift' as well as 'behaviourshift'
- Devise a mix of strategies from successful organisational culture change
- Take a gradual approach to getting evaluation used more and more and in different ways; build confidence along the way

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Formal policies, systems, & practices

Policies & Systems

- Tough evaluation of successes & failures
- Performance appraisal systems recognise real contributions to vision
- Effective knowledge management systems

Formal Practices

- Experimentation with new methods/programmes
- Regular benchmarking against others' good practice
- Ongoing self-evaluation, plus external critiques

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Informal practices & symbolic actions

Informal Practices

- Flexibility/fluidity allows continual evaluation & streamlining
- Diversity of practice & methods; deliberate use of diverse teams
- Assumptions & status quo regularly challenged
- People often seek out advice or ideas from other organisations or teams

Symbolic Actions

- Risk-takers, experimenters and those who constructively critique the status quo are recognised, promoted and rewarded
- Near misses on high goals rewarded more than easily clearing easy targets
- Negative results are celebrated as new knowledge
- Top management actively seeks out tough criticism

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Evaluative beliefs, values, & attitudes

Beliefs

- It is valuable to distinguish good from poor performance
- Without feedback & criticism, excellence is impossible – especially at the top!
- No 'sacred cows'

Values & Attitudes

- The evaluative attitude: "the relentless pursuit of the truth about quality"
- Openness to change & continual improvement
- Diverse perspectives and 'outside-the-box' thinking are highly valued

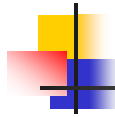
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Principles for changing behaviour

- In order to change behaviour, people generally need:
 - **Method** (skills, knowledge, competencies and resources to implement the change)
 - **Model** for change (What does the new behaviour/practice actually look like? How will we know if we're doing it right?)
 - **Motivation** (intrinsic – understanding that it's a good idea; plus extrinsic – carrots and sticks)

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Mindshift and behaviourshift

- Important to clarify targets of change:
 - Behaviourshift only → sham compliance
 - Mindshift only → great intentions, no action
- Real culture change must target both
- Behaviourshift needs:
 - Know-how/skills
 - Role models/coaches
 - Extrinsic motivators
- Mindshift needs:
 - Persuasion/buy-in
 - Symbolic action: 'walk the talk'
 - Intrinsic motivation

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Strategies from successful culture change

1. Get top management commitment
2. Identify 'evaluation evangelists'
3. Communicate the 'evaluation imperative'
4. Train people in evaluation skills
5. Model the importance of external criticism (senior management)
6. Hire a critical mass of outsiders with the "evaluative attitude"
7. Listen to skeptics & cynics; allow powerful change blockers the chance to move on
8. Recognise and reward new behaviours & mindset, including 'mistake of the month'

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So, what can evaluators do to help?

- Evaluation is threatening to many, so jumping in 'boots and all' is usually not the best approach!
- Its potential is often underestimated – it has many quite different uses, not all of them about 'accountability' (the threat)
- Evaluation is not just one 'thing' or type of activity; we need to remind people there is a range of options
- Evaluations don't just produce findings; they can help infuse 'evaluative thinking' into the organisation, which can enhance effectiveness in many ways (process use, conceptual use)

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Evaluation: A Menu of Options

- Self-evaluation/quality management
 - Staff (perhaps in collaboration with recipients) evaluate their own programme or project
- Facilitated self-evaluation
 - An evaluation consultant helps staff evaluate their own programme or project
- External evaluation
 - An independent evaluator (from outside the organisation) reviews the programme or project

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Why use self-evaluation?

- Managerial responsibility for quality
 - Every manager is responsible for the quality or effectiveness of his/her own programme or department
→ Evaluation is an *integral part* of management
- Leadership – helping staff identify goals and think about quality and value
 - Evaluation helps staff think about the purpose of their work, the desired outputs and outcomes and what it means to produce quality and create value
- Innovation and experimentation
 - Quality improvement = experimenting with new and innovative ideas/methods for adding value
 - Evaluation = finding out which of those ideas/methods worked best, and should be implemented more widely

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Why use facilitated self-evaluation?

- To enhance evaluation knowledge and expertise within the organisation
 - Facilitated self-evaluation provides an excellent opportunity for “learning by doing”
- To set up a good self-evaluation system
 - A facilitated self-evaluation can be used to set up a system that can later be used by staff without outside expertise
- As an organisational change intervention
 - Participation in a facilitated self-evaluation process can help change organisational culture (thinking and behavior)

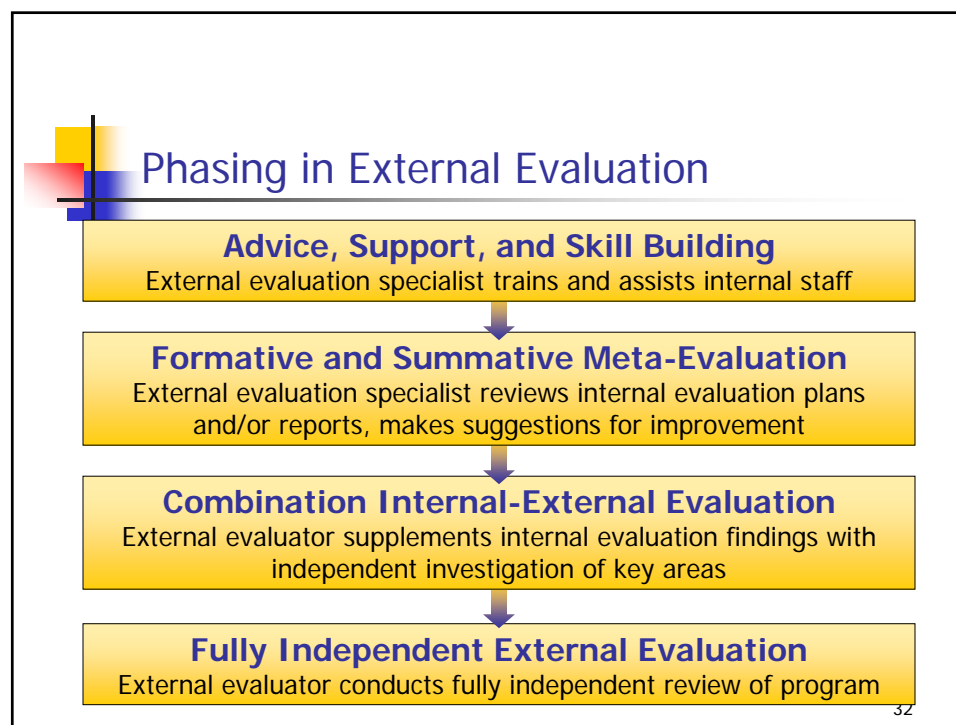
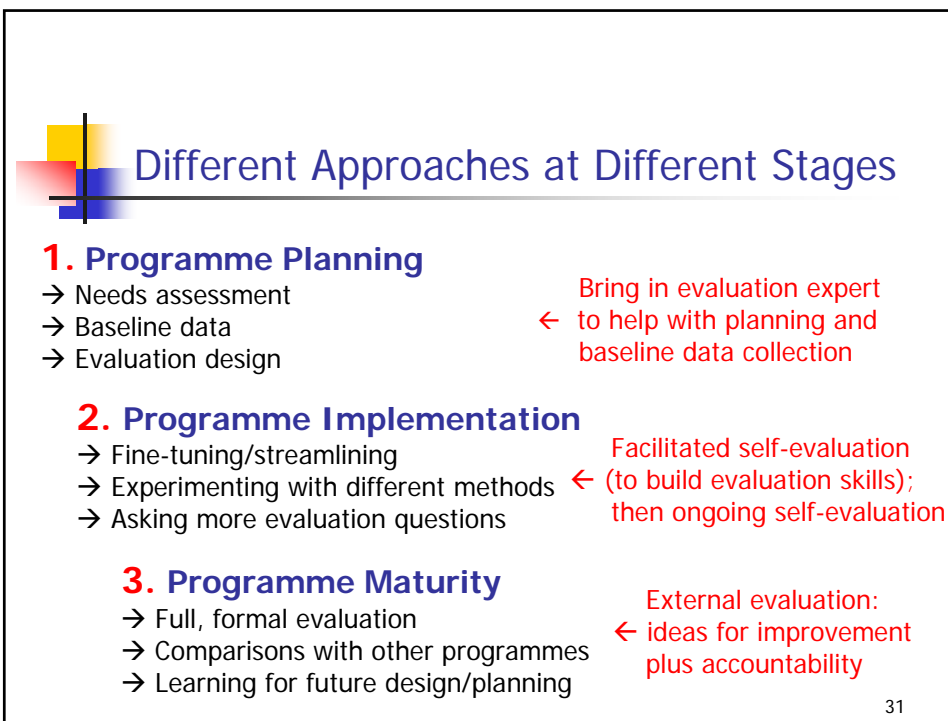
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Why use external evaluation?

- A fresh set of eyes
 - What are our self-evaluation processes missing?
 - Especially useful for finding unexpected results/ripple effects, and/or new ways of thinking about the intervention
- A source of new ideas
 - External evaluation consultants have often seen many programmes of this type, and can bring “best practice” ideas from what they have seen elsewhere
- Independence
 - Someone with no vested interest in the program → less biased toward looking for a particular result
 - Important for accountability and perceived objectivity

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- Phasing in Evaluation**
- Use a strategic mix of approaches
 - Different approaches are useful at different stages
 - Together they are a powerful combination for enhancing success, learning, and accountability
 - Build evaluation capacity gradually
 - Build internal evaluation skills
 - improve programme performance
 - increase confidence in quality
 - Develop a thirst for new perspectives and ideas
 - valuing the 'external eye'
 - 100% positive feedback = not enough innovation!
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