

Regenerative Business Organization

**Building a Developmental Culture with Professional Development
as the instrument**

Aims of Developmental Business Organization Sessions:

- 1) To understand a thinking technology for the development of value adding processes in a comprehensive interrelated way.**

Throughout these sessions we are attempting to create an understanding of a technology for bringing about the development of value adding processes and businesses. Just as the fields of engineering, law or medicine form a holistic technology so too does this technology for the development of value adding processes. This series overall is designed to be a comprehensive whole that provides the ability to understand this technology.

- 2) To apply this thinking technology developmentally to yourself and your value adding process in a way that:**

- **improves *the value generating capability* of your value adding process and**
- **improves the performance of the business.**
- **improves the performance and value generating ableness of those you serve as clients, customers and users.**

The implication of this is that we will do work to understand an aspect of this technology, then give you a chance to apply it back in the field, then do some more work in the next session, then apply it, etc. The aim of this application is to increase the value generation of the value adding process and improve the performance of the businesses you are a part of. This is not designed as a training course which passes on information. It is meant to be focused on the capacity to develop the individual businesses and business systems you are a part of in a way that they improve their value-generating capability.

- 3) Personal and professional development is a form of Essence thinking.**

Personal and professional development is a form of thinking regarding how to find and deliver the best value for your business, your marketplace beneficiaries, and the world we live in.

There are particular cultural norms that underlie developmental work and that characterize a Regenerative Business organization. This cultural basis can be represented by the framework below.



Ground: The cultural grounds to carry out development is disciplined thinking and disciplined behavior. We tend to do a considerable amount of ad hoc thinking in business because there is not much common knowledge about the technology of managing value adding processes. People in business have many tools and techniques but no comprehensive technology for thinking about business. Thus, people tend mostly to think by gut inner reactions or cultural norms in business. Other fields, such as engineering, medicine and law have a much more disciplined approach. When we work on organizations developmentally, we need to develop the rigor of disciplined thinking and disciplined behavior. It is the grounds on which development is possible.

Disciplined thinking means having a particular thinking rigor that answers to any questions or hypothesis need to satisfy. In engineering, there is a rigor for thinking about something and we follow that in order to come to an appropriate conclusion. This discipline of thinking sometimes comes in the form of a formulation, dynamic, methodology, etc. It comes in many forms yet is always a particular rigor that causes one to test the thought process while generating an answer. Undisciplined thinking, reflected in brainstorming, is where we do not need to test our thinking process against any rigor, right, or parameters. We just think without the ability to really test the process by which we are thinking to arrive at the answer. Without testing this process, we cannot see whether we accommodated for the appropriate things in coming to a conclusion or an answer.

Instrument: The second cultural underpinning for the Regenerative Business, the instrumental point of the tetrad, relates to arenas of professional development. Instead of having a job, we

should have an arena for professional development as our work. If we were in a leather jacket business, there would be critical systems where we would need to be successful in order to continuously develop the value of the jackets and the value of our value adding process. My limited knowledge would indicate the arenas of tanning, dying and jacket design/ pattern making as the arenas we would need to be knowledgeable about to be successful and developmental. These would be the potential areas for the development of professional understanding and discipline. Becoming a professional in an arena is different than having a job in that arena because having a profession means continuously increasing and deepening the understanding of dying or tanning or some other critical system and then using this knowledge to bring about improvement and development. By organizing this way, people are able to incorporate the ongoing acquisition of knowledge and deepen their understanding into the work they do. These are arenas where people can employ their ongoing professional development and their increased capacities to develop a particular value adding process and bring about its continued development and evolution.

The current view of professional development that is most prevalent is a functional view. People currently seek a professional job as an accountant, engineer, etc. However, the real heart of the business is where value is actualized and realized. The value in the leather jacket business is actually produced in the tanning, the dying and the patterning. The professional base for people should be at the heart where value is added. A Regenerative Business is based upon a culture that is moving toward professionalism in an area that represents a critical success factor in the development of value for business.

Direction: The third cultural attribute, which creates overall direction for the business, is community. Businesses often view themselves as isolated entities, separate from others in the value-added process, separate from others in the industry, separate from the support base of the community in terms of education, taxation, and so forth. In actuality, all of these form a system and are highly interdependent with one another. Each is dependent on the success and evolution of the other. Indicated by the interdependence of this system is the need for a broader scale look at our business. Instead of looking at business as an individual entity, we view our business as nested in a community. From this broader view, we see ourselves engaged in some overall common endeavor that supersedes the individualistic endeavor of an individual entity. We gain a community sense, where we try to raise the platform of the whole. We recognize that the infrastructures (industry, finance, Governance) all have to evolve, or we cannot evolve. We strive to bring life within the community to continuously higher order, with the recognition that as the platform goes down so do we and as the platform moves up, obviously so do we.

Goal: Decision making processes, which really we image effects to our **performance**, need to be derived from looking at something as a systemic whole. We often examine things incrementally or elementally as a part. From this elemental view, we calculate the payoff and decide whether we should or should not do something. By taking a view of something as a systemic whole, a decision would be made in light of what is going to or needs to interact with what in what way in order to create a balanced and reinforcing development across broader wholes. Normal decision-making processes are atomistic, focusing on particular key activities one at a time, rather than managing things in a systemic fashion and holistically across a whole.

In summary, there are four key areas that are important to develop the cultural base for a Regenerative Business organization. First is disciplined behavior and disciplined thinking managed with shared framework thinking. Second is to view work from each member of organization as engaging in a long-thought profession. Third is to look at what we are part of in terms of it being a in communities rather than isolated parts. Lastly is to set direction in a way that is systematically related to a larger whole. It is important to contrast these features with our current culture and its predominant features. Is it based on disciplined thinking, ongoing evolution of professionalism, and the building of communities? Are decisions made on the basis of seeing the systemic relationships between wholes?

Beliefs around the points of the tetrad form the underpinnings of the culture in regard to which there is continuous development. These are the fundamental beliefs that characterize the social structure of a group of people involved in a true developmental value adding process, as a system. What is required is the living out of this particular belief system by different members that form the culture. Everyone in that culture, if it is to be effective developmentally, has to be aligned to and believe in disciplined thinking and disciplined behavior. They also must recognize that when one enters into a business organization, they have the obligation to continuously evolve their professionalism in a field that fits the essence of the value adding process and the person's essence. A person does not just learn a job in the beginning and then the learning period is over. Just like in any profession that is truly dealt with as a profession, there is an open-ended capacity that can be continuously worked on and evolved in the course of doing work.

The ongoing pursuit of those cultural beliefs is very evident not only in the business, but also as people carry them into other avenues of life, i.e., in the community work, religious work,

educational system work. Those same underpinnings carry through in work and the total work surroundings. In a sense they have become their cultural base. It makes a distinctive difference.

This nature of culture can become fairly dominant in three to five years. This is relatively quick because it is accomplished by integrating culture into all work. I think it develops that rapidly as contrasted to sometimes generations to establish tribal or national cultures. The reason for this relatively rapid cultural development is that these cultural aspects are integrated into the mental processing that people engage in and ongoingly in the management of what they do and of their value adding process. Where other cultures, often are stimulated through religions, or other different ways, but are not ongoingly routinely practiced in a work setting. How rapidly it develops is dependent upon the ongoing use of these central beliefs and their application to work. This is particularly inculcated through framework thinking that embeds disciplined thinking by sharing *how* we think together, *language* with shared meaning, and systems thinking that connects community, inner and outer through the frameworks. Every time we avoid using shared frameworks we undermine culture of disciplined thinking.

It is not a matter of imposing your beliefs on the culture. It is more like integrating existing beliefs or values into a higher order, and that is why it happens quickly and is sustained. If one person leaves, the basic beliefs or values are still there. This is referring not to a country as a whole, but to a business unit within a country. It can happen in four or five years, and once it happens they are very stable.

Normally, people are recruited on the basis of coming to work a week and then deciding whether they want to join. This gives them a chance to see whether it is the kind of work system and belief system that they want to support and live by. There also are strongly held expectations of what an individual needs to strive for or work toward. They really expect people to build the culture, work actively at it.

A Regenerative Business has goals that are based on what is going to impact and what way. The goals of most American firms are much more narrowly set primarily toward the stockholder/investor communities and financial performance. Regenerative Businesses start from the business looking at things from a holistic perspective and trying to gain some holistic alignment to goals.

Breakout Exercise:

Identify businesses that you think are becoming developmental and those that, in a sense, are developed but are reversing themselves. Assess those cultures against these points of the tetrad as primary cultural values as a means of validating or invalidating them.

Being Development - Professional and Personal Development:

In *being* terms, we are considering people. Two items are important:

- That people see themselves in a professional field that is part of the value-adding process and
- That people see the need for personal development and the performance of developmental roles.

Related to professional development, the example we used regarding a leather coat manufacturer where that the fields of tanning, dying, and cutting/ patterning would each be arenas of potential professional expertise. Instead of having an organization of people in jobs, we organize by having people in fields where they continue to develop a professional level of expertise that will deepen the organizations understanding of its value-adding process potential. People, in order to drive this kind of organization personally, need to be oriented into fields based on the capacity called for in their industry and communities as well as their essence.

Related to personal development, instead of just a job structure, people are involved in personal development and also the performance of developmental roles the improves performance with stakeholders starting with consumers. When the organization is working on development, there is considerable free space for somebody that can be a designer, material user, effects in use, or other roles. There are many different roles to be filled and we can fill those roles pretty organically and will enable the development of the individual as he/she fulfills that role. As we move into this level of managing process, we need to look at roles more externally connected in service of market service, rather than how we internally look at jobs and delegating work. We organize work around a particular arena of expertise that is deepened overtime or bring into existence a particular nature of development of offerings..

We must identify those systems with open ended potential for continuous advancement of value. We then need to envision something in structuring terms within systems because this gives us a

start point for development. Systems, if we go back to our jacket makers example, would be the tanning, the dying, the cutting /patterning, and so forth. These are the areas of potential for new value. Against those overall open systems, we want to work on the development of particular technical or design system in terms of the effect they produce and their effectiveness of producing that effect. We would also deal with the development of the product offering.

Within that framework, we identified the need to start by envisioning or developing a sense of "what we want to produce." This is different than starting from work or job definition, but rather is starting from a sense like, "Let's have a dinner and make it developmental." This approach causes us to take a look at the added value we can gain from something or produce from something by viewing it as a whole and as a potential arena for development. The nature of mentality we are dealing with in the middle area is systems thinking as contrasted to elemental thinking at the lower levels. If we examine this level related to our cultural values, we find that once again required to move up from the base level to the second level of managing process is an increase in levels of thinking discipline, an increase in professionalism, an increase in capacity to see something as systemic wholes, and an increase in the sense of community.