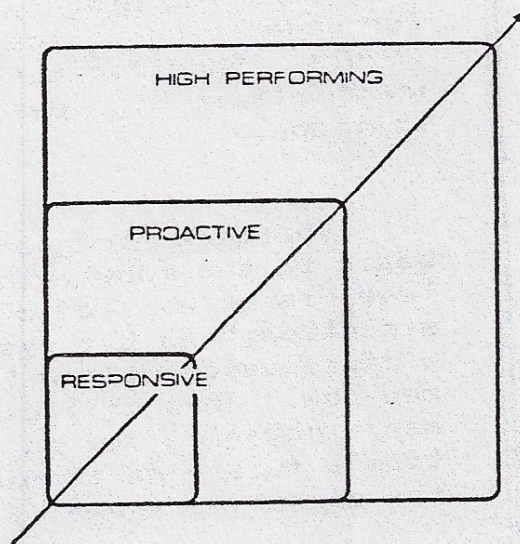


HIGH PERFORMANCE PROGRAMMING

A FRAMEWORK FOR TRANSFORMING ORGANIZATIONS

LINDA NELSON AND FRANK BURNS



"Our intention is to provide leaders and managers, particularly those at the executive level of responsibility, with new ways of thinking coherently about what they can do to influence the future of their organization -- not merely to ensure its viability and success in a changing world, but to set it on a navigable course for excellence."

From the forthcoming book
Organization Transformation

John Adams, Ed.



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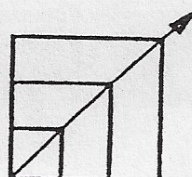
L. Nelson and F. Burns

INTRODUCTION

The High Performance Programming (HPP) model illustrates a way of thinking about the process that can assist in transforming an organizational system. The structure of the model provides a framework for diagnosing current levels of performance for understanding the potential for performance levels. Specific methods are outlined for creating which elicit high performance from individuals and organizations.

The term "programming" is used to highlight a basic to the model, that an organization's performance level is a function of past implicit or explicit "instructions" to the system. Similarly, future performance is a consequence of how the organization's culture is defined now. This critical issue is the key to understanding the performance potential of an organization. Specific instructions for an organization's future performance is a direct result of the operative frame of reference supplied by the model.

This concept is reflected in the series of frames that make up the body of the HPP model, shown in Figure 1. These four frames portrays a distinct operating environment. With the exception of the REACTIVE frame, each nested one inside the next to reflect one of the frames of the model that each larger frame builds upon the previous one. The PROACTIVE frame of reference is an enhanced cultural context for the frame or frame of reference. The PROACTIVE frame of reference is an extension of the frame of reference to the RESPONSIVE frame. Likewise, the HIGH PERFORMANCE frame of reference is an expansion beyond the PROACTIVE frame of reference. The HIGH PERFORMANCE frame includes both the PROACTIVE and RESPONSIVE frames.



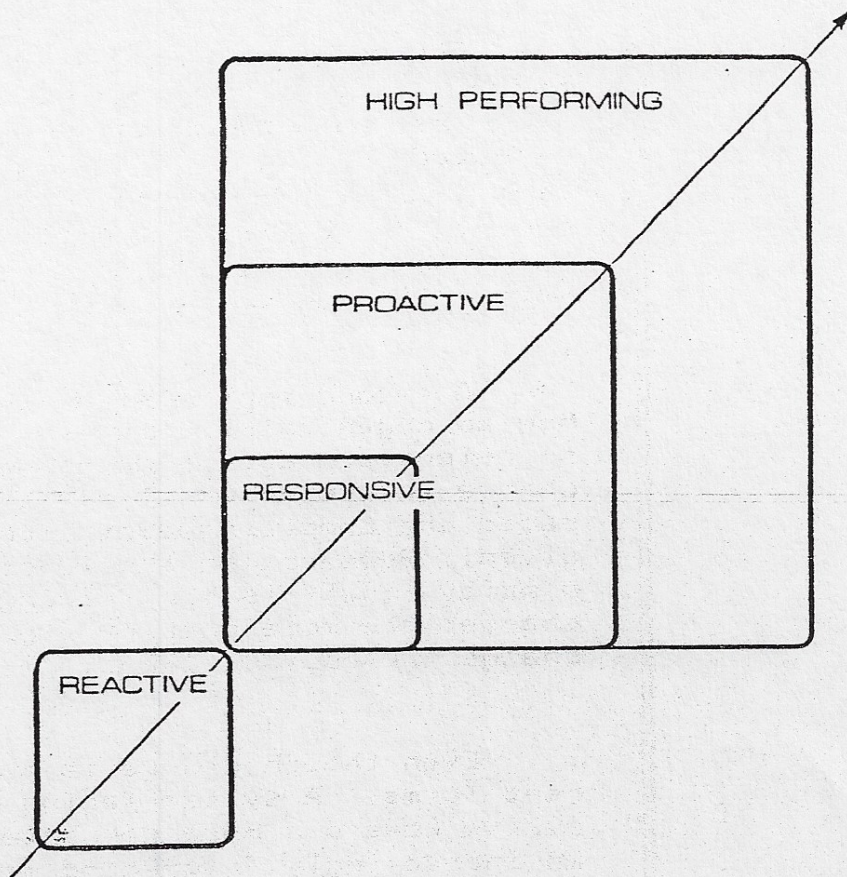
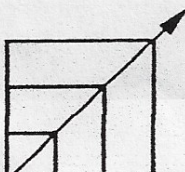


Figure 1. The Framework of the High Performance Programming Model.

BACKGROUND

The concept of frames of reference is applied here as a useful way to examine the difference between organizational change efforts that merely re-sort and re-label the organization's sub-elements and functions, and change efforts which truly result in a new and transformed organization. Our experience suggests that no matter how dramatic a change effort looks on paper, or how solid the reasoning behind it, actual improved performance will result only if there is also a parallel change in the frame of reference of the people in the organization.



For example, we observed the implementation of a new strategy in an organization. Though conceived as a change in the organization's responsiveness, the change actually amounted to "gridlock." All eight layers of management got caught up in old habits of thought, continued to do everything go through old channels. Their implicit reference virtually neutralized the intended organizational matrix strategy.

A second and related issue illuminated by research on how an organization's culture, reflected in its system of reference, allows or hinders it in adapting to change in its internal and external environment. In a fast-paced and complex society, change is no longer a given. Research on the functioning of systems in a complex environment shows that complexity itself is the driving force behind the need for change; the more complex a given system, the faster the rate of change (Prigogine, 1979).

Even though change is a given, it takes different forms. A system facing increasing complexity will either evolve toward a more connected and integrated state or toward an increasingly fragmented state. Organizational systems, can be observed over time to move into more productive states or to devolve into lower, less effective states.

In this summary description of the HPP model, we describe the characteristics of organizations that can be REACTIVE and drifting toward increasing disorganization. Then we describe RESPONSIVE, PROACTIVE, and HIGH PERFORMANCE organizations and outline the techniques and strategies employed to move toward the higher levels of performance. In the future, our intention is to provide leaders and managers, particularly those at the executive level of responsibility, with a framework for thinking coherently about what they can do for the future of their organization -- not merely to ensure survival and success in a changing world, but to set it on a course for excellence.

We begin with an examination of organizations where disorganization and disorganization have already begun.



THE REACTIVE ORGANIZATION

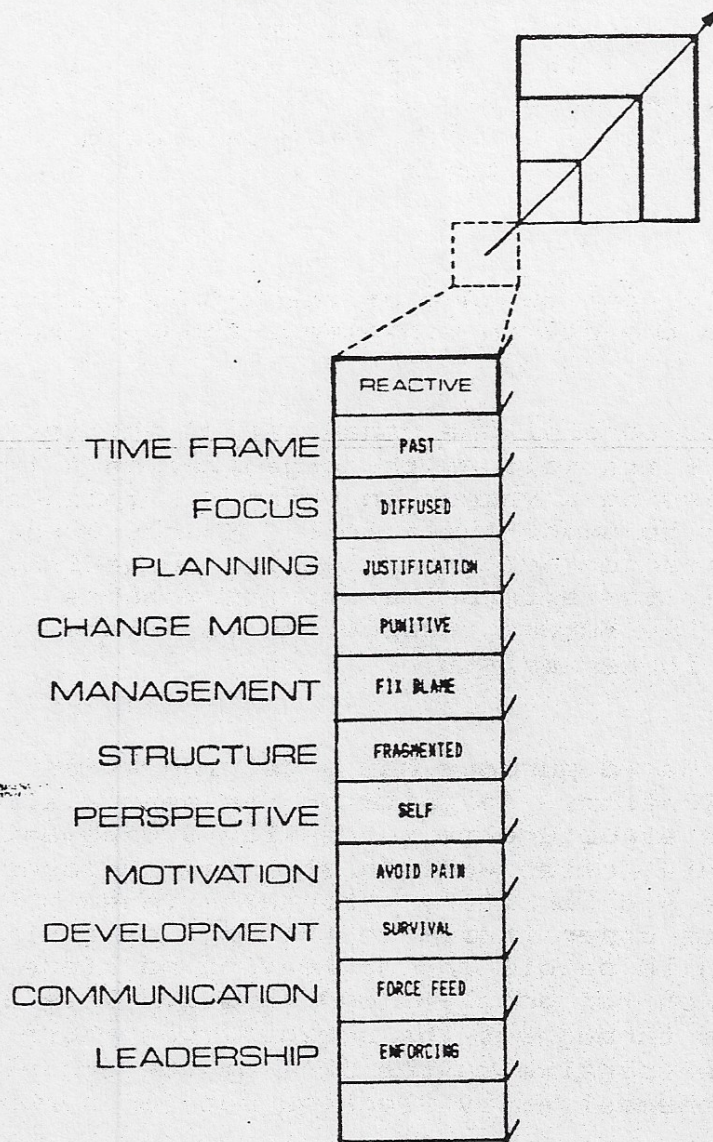
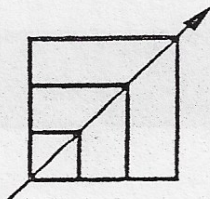


Figure 2. The Culture of the Reactive Organization.

The REACTIVE state is not the state in which organizations begin. But, it is the state in which survival itself may be in question. In talking to members of these organizations, one begins to notice an absence of any kind of shared purpose or sense



of accomplishment. Not only will one get different answers about what's important, one will also be left with the distinct impression that nobody cares much either. The REACTIVE frame is the state of disintegration into which an organization devolves when its leaders neglect to keep the organization focused on its purpose.

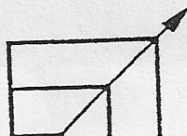
Diagnostically, the culture of the REACTIVE organization can be described using the eleven dimensions shown in Figure 2.

The central purpose of the organization has lost its vitality and no longer plays its role as the organization's foundational principle, thus leaving a vacuum in which dis-integration and dis-organization begin to exact their toll. Shared purpose and clear goals in an organization act as a steering mechanism. Without well-focused goals, the enterprise and its members are adrift. Given no focus on the future, people become fixated on the past, ... a past that no longer exists.

The lack of shared purpose has a telling effect on the structure of the organization. In spite of its neatly aligned appearance on paper, the structure is in reality a fragmented collection of separate elements, often working at cross purposes and competing over resources and territory. Managers in such REACTIVE cultures lay intricate paper trails in the hope of giving the appearance of dedication to detail and of leaving no stone unturned in their endless search for problems and faults. This breeds a defensive atmosphere throughout the organization which results in a self-centered perspective on the part of the organization's members who protect themselves by "looking out for Number One."

The purpose of planning is similarly debased. Instead of planning the future direction of the organization, managers in a REACTIVE organizational culture carry out huge paperwork drills designed to defend their current resource postures. Rather than being "pulled" by a vision of future achievements to be realized, the organization is driven by the fear of not being able to justify its continued existence.

People caught in a REACTIVE organization seem strikingly similar to persons suffering from the mental dis-ease of paranoia.



They exhibit low enthusiasm for anything but survival and they display chronic cynicism, pessimism and distrust of others. They are trapped inside what classical psychologists would call a "negative reinforcement environment" -- an environment in which behavior is reinforced by the avoidance of painful consequences. This distortion in the organization's reward system is a key to understanding the obsession displayed by most long-term inhabitants of a REACTIVE culture with staying out of trouble. Sticking one's neck out is viewed as tantamount to getting it cut off.

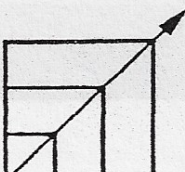
Punitive environments are in evidence when managers behave as if "taking care of problems" means finding who can be blamed for them, when change takes place primarily through punitive and corrective means, and when communication takes the form of a force-feed system of directives rolling down through the fragmented hierarchy -- complimented by paperwork fighting its way back up.

Another lethal aspect of REACTIVE cultures is the almost total unwillingness of subordinates to tell their bosses bad news unless it can no longer be hidden. The bosses, for their part, rarely praise their people for good work, saying (and thinking) "that's what they get paid for."

It's our observation that one of the primary reasons for the confusion and lack of clarity in REACTIVE cultures is the prevailing norm against the asking of questions by subordinates of their bosses. Not only are supervisors never asked questions that might be interpreted as challenging the merit or wisdom of their decisions, they are rarely even asked questions for clarity.

The leadership style observed in REACTIVE organizations is usually juvenile and oriented on "kicking ass." We have seen many a "nice guy" revert to this "leader-as-obedience-trainer" style of leadership upon entering a REACTIVE organization. It isn't so much that this is a preferred style, as it is the style that appears to work, at least in the short term, in such an organization.

As many supervisors and managers have discovered, getting work done in REACTIVE organizations takes a lot of kicking and shoving. People learn to shut down in painful environments.



They become insensitive in order to survive. Managers have been co-opted into acting like a "kick-ass" superior to attract the attention of subordinates who have become inured to the most direct and demanding sorts of instructions.

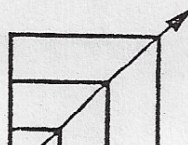
Another troublesome characteristic of REACTIVE organizations is that they are the ones whose members are least likely to change. One would think that people would jump at the chance to change these painful cultures. Unfortunately, the opposite is the case. Change brings with it the terrifying potential that the "rules of the game" will change,....rules that have been learned the hard way from past experience. Thus, these painful organizational climates are not only tolerated but are perpetuated by the very persons suffering the most from them for they at least know what NOT to do. The unknown future is a trouble and threatens one's ability to predict - territory is a fear-inducing prospect.

BUILDING THE RESPONSIVE ORGANIZATION

To move the culture out of a REACTIVE frame of reference into a RESPONSIVE one requires a carefully balanced approach that entails both patience and leadership. Change must be implemented in the frame of reference of the members individually and the organization as a whole. The leaders must enhance the organization as to goals and purposes. And, the change must be carried out in a way that builds a bond of mutual trust between the leaders and the led.

A well established set of techniques to accomplish these requirements has been the stock-in-trade of leadership development consultants for decades. These techniques are designed to revitalize and re-energize the organization by re-focusing its focus on goals and internal cohesion. See Figure 3.

The first and most important step in this re-focusing process is to re-focus the organization on clearly defined goals. Goals supply the foundation for building a sense of direction among the organization's members. The goals can be annual or target on major projects. The point is that they must be specific enough to clarify the outputs that are expected, by whom, and by when.



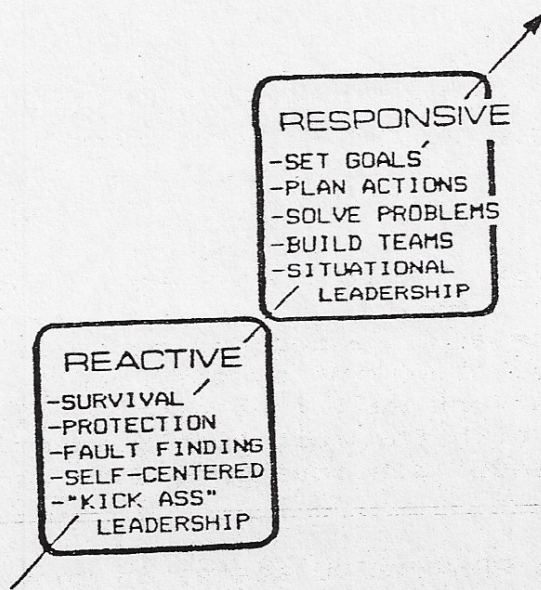
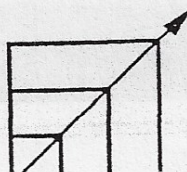


Figure 3. The Responsive Frame of Reference.

Goal setting and action planning sessions are the most effective means of gaining the understanding and commitment of those who will be held accountable for carrying out necessary tasks. This means that these people must participate in developing the goals and plans designed to achieve them. We have seen this whole process go down the proverbial drain when done by managers in isolation and then merely passed out to their subordinates. Goal setting and action planning sessions in which managers and subordinates participate are the best way of building shared purpose, understanding and commitment. And they provide a basis for building the trust and clarity that are critical to motivating the individual and instilling esprit-de-corps.

Once goals and plans are established, slippage and unexpected events or problems can be identified BEFORE they become crises. Good problem solving strategies are available to promote effective participation and better solutions. As with goal setting and action planning, improved understanding and follow through are gained when the team members responsible for carrying out the solutions are involved in the problem solving process. This process, used so effectively by Japanese managers in the Quality Circle programs, has the added advantage of not only training personnel to solve problems but to be on the constant lookout for them as well.



As stated earlier, it is up to the leader to carry out these processes competently and in a manner that is responsive to the needs of her or his people. We suggest leaders follow the guidelines provided by the "Situational Leadership" model when moving their organization from a REACTIVE to RESPONSIVE state. Developed by Hersey and Blanchard, this model emphasizes that leaders must adapt their style to fit the maturity level (knowledge and experience) of the follower. While the new employee needs direction and structure, the more experienced employee requires less "telling" and more "selling" behavior by the leader. Followers with higher maturity levels work well in a participative mode with the leader. And finally, with the most highly experienced and qualified followers, the leader can move into a delegative style.

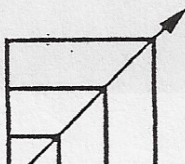
Movement toward a RESPONSIVE state, in summary, has to begin with a leader who is RESPONSIVE to the needs of adults to be treated AS adults.

THE RESULTING RESPONSIVE CULTURE

Provided the above set of management and leadership practices are carried out, the RESPONSIVE organizational culture will reflect the characteristics shown in Figure 4.

Team members are focused on producing outputs in the present through planned activities to achieve near term goals. Management's role is oriented on keeping team efforts coordinated and responsive to changing needs and conditions. Since members help develop the goals and plans of action, they know what output is expected and what activities need to be performed. They work as cohesive teams, able to adapt as problems are identified and solved. This environment fosters a team perspective rather than a self-centered one and results in team members looking out for each other and for the good of the organization.

The boss is a leader and coach who motivates group members by rewarding high performance through positive feedback, awards, and pay increases BASED ON MERIT. And, he or she keeps the team efforts coordinated and focused on the goals through planning, evaluating progress and promoting team cohesion.



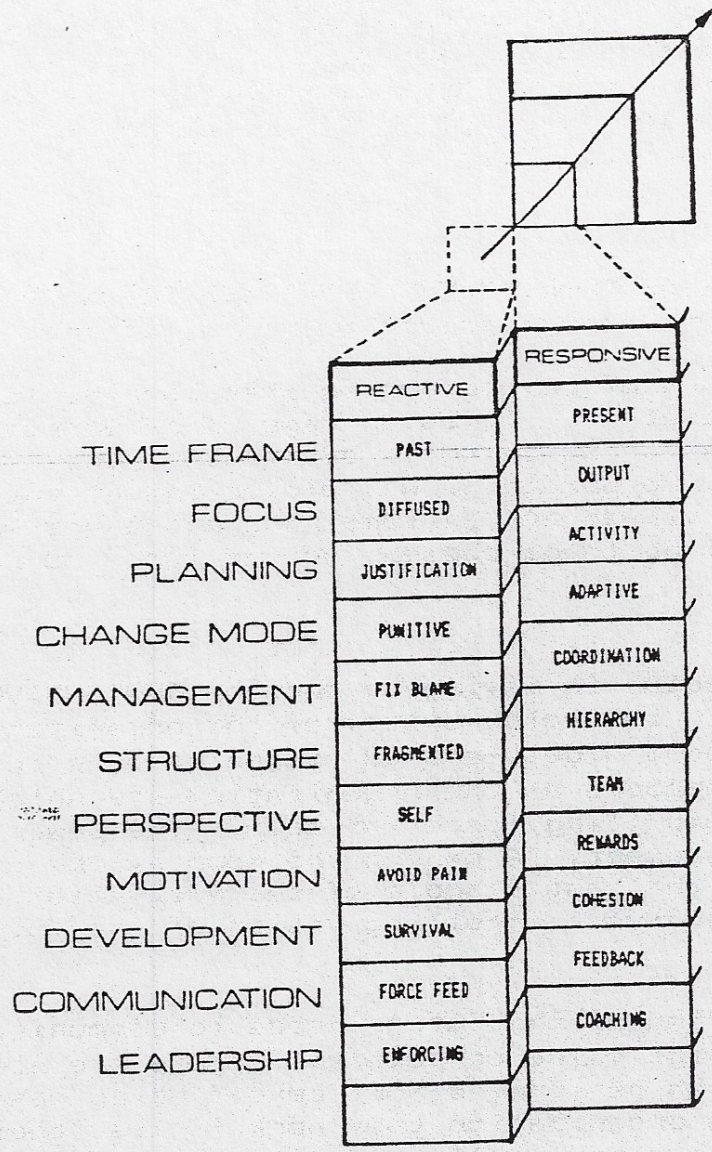
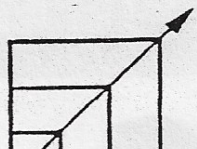


Figure 4. The Culture of the Responsive Organization.

While the RESPONSIVE state is productive and beneficial, and certainly far superior to the REACTIVE state, it can also be seen as being the operational level of a larger cultural frame of reference that is PROACTIVE as well as RESPONSIVE.



To maintain high levels of responsiveness and adaptability, the organization needs a larger and more expansive frame of reference that supplies the guiding philosophy and vision around which individuals, teams and organizational elements become an aligned and attuned whole. This larger context is the PROACTIVE frame.

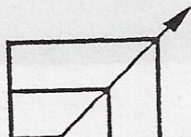
STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPING THE PROACTIVE ORGANIZATION

A PROACTIVE frame of reference requires looking to the future and seizing the initiative. It is a frame of reference from which the future is seen as a choice to be made rather than a given with which to cope. It incorporates a way of looking at the world in which the future is viewed not as something out there waiting to happen but as something to be chosen, worked for, and realized (Beer, 1981).

The critical factor in moving beyond the RESPONSIVE frame of reference lies within the value system of the organization. The chosen future must be a widely-shared vision that is congruent with the values of members of the organization and which serves as an attractive and compelling force for them. The power of NASA's original mission statement, "A man on the moon by the end of the decade," is perhaps the best example of the motivational force supplied by an attractive, compelling vision of the future.

Second, the vision of the future needs to communicate a choice that places high value on people. People are simply not motivated to put forth personal effort beyond being responsive unless they feel the organization they work for is "their" organization and values them personally and professionally. The success of Japanese management in producing high quality products through instituting Quality Circles is largely due to the message conveyed to the workforce that management genuinely values and wants their ideas.

Third, the future vision must reflect a commitment to human values from which people derive a deep sense of personal meaning and satisfaction. High purpose, to be achieved, must be based on higher order values. It is this point that companies which focus solely on the bottom line fail to take into account. High purpose can not be counted or quantified for it addresses emotional qualities rather than material ends.



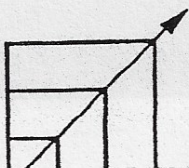
Stongly held values and the norms of behavior that flow from them serve an often overlooked role. Values are normative beliefs held by individuals as to what is good and desirable. They provide standards by which people are influenced in their choice of actions. The clearer and more deeply shared the organization's value system, the more it provides direction for individual behavior, and the less need there is for formal policies and rules and regulations. Thus, an enormous amount of energy that might otherwise be tied up in developing, perpetuating and enforcing official rules -- which can eventually hamstring an organization with rigidity it can't afford -- is released to work on attaining the desired future state.

Although a widely shared set of organizational values is necessary to propel the organization into the PROACTIVE frame, which values are selected is critical. Certain types of values are needed. For example, values that reinforce one's sense of interdependence with the environment are important in order to gain commitment to producing results valued by the larger cultural system, e.g., the customer.

The Matsushita Corporation, one of the most successful companies in the world, rose from a one-man bicycle shop to an eleven billion dollar industrial giant with a corporate philosophy aimed toward producing results valued by the larger system. The underlying foundation of Matsushita's management genius lay in his deeply held conviction that Matsushita must contribute to improving the standard of living in the larger society.

Figure 5. shows the types of strategies that foster PROACTIVE organizational cultures. These include establishing values-based and results-oriented mission statements and developing the long range plans to accomplish them. To maintain progress and ensure future results are achieved, decisionmakers need to establish performance feedback systems to keep themselves up-dated on significant changes and performance trends. This does NOT mean that executives should bury themselves in endless briefings and reports but that they should identify a few critical performance indices and manage them intensively.

Clearly stated and widely shared organizational values act as the cohesive glue that cements its culture together. These values, embedded in the corporate philosophy and manifested every



day in how it operates, determine whether the organization will exist mechanically, adding to or subtracting from its collection of functions, or live organically, developing a sense of community in which work teams are knitted together to form the larger cultural fabric. It is the role of leaders to shape and mold the type of values that provide positive meaning and value to the members' lives.

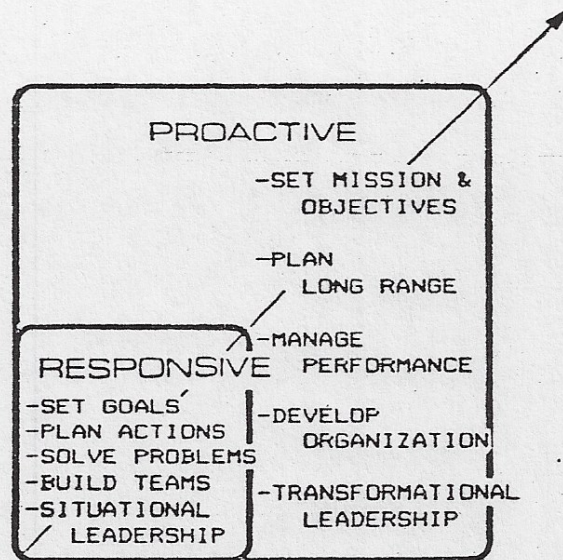
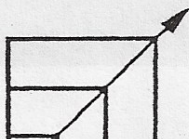


Figure 5. The Proactive Frame of Reference.

This style of values-based leadership can be called "transformational." Transformational leaders engage their followers at the values level as opposed to merely activating them at the material level. The transformational leader relates to the full person of their followers by looking for ways of developing their potentials and satisfying their higher needs (Burns, 1978).

Genuine transformational leadership demands a resolute commitment to fundamental ethics and integrity, demonstrated through congruent behavior. Transformational leaders understand that true development can only take place as a function of the co-development of themselves and others. Thus, values for the transformational leader are the basis for developing the human potential of the organization as a whole.



THE RESULTING PROACTIVE CULTURE

The results of these management strategies are presented in Figure 6. along the same eleven dimensions used previously.

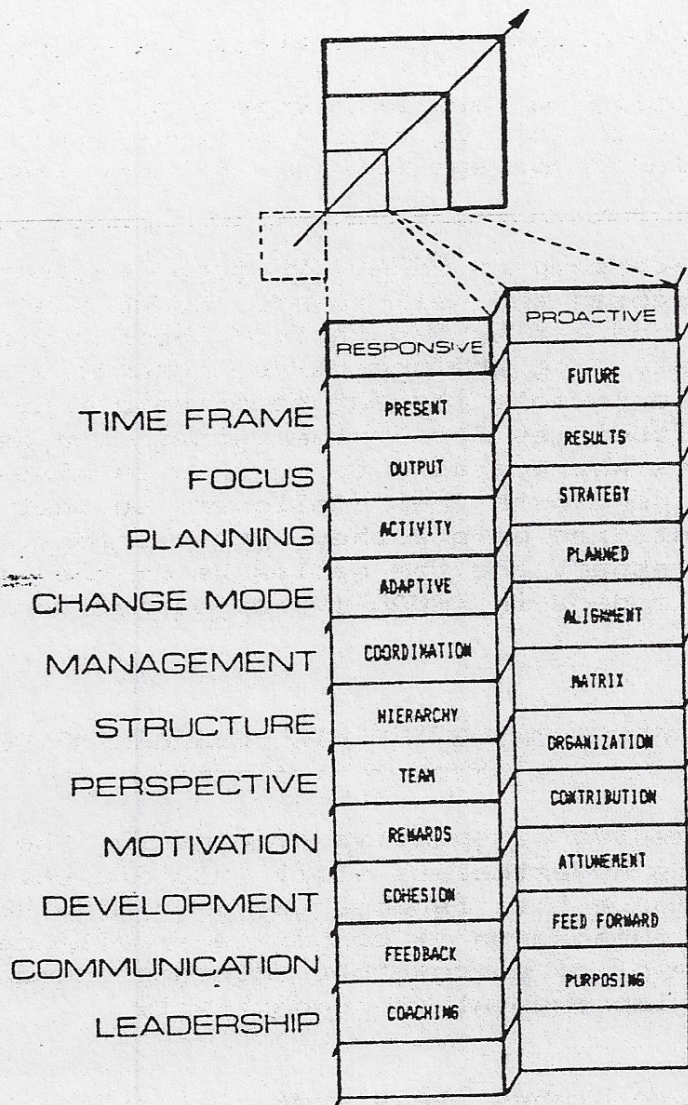


Figure 6. The Culture of the Proactive Organization.

Future oriented, firmly rooted in a values based philosophy, the organization is pointed toward long term results and the strategies for achieving them. Change is planned for and used by leaders to keep the organization clearly focused on its purpose. Communication is also focused toward the future and directed toward how the current state effects future plans.

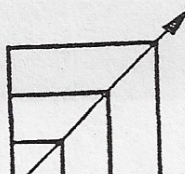
Management ensures the alignment and integration of sub-organization objectives within a total whole. Members are motivated by the opportunity to make a contribution toward achieving a future they value and to work as cohesive teams aligned with and attuned to the larger perspective of the organization.

The role of leadership in PROACTIVE organizations is to keep the organization purposed and well-tuned. Leaders are required to think strategically and act systemically. Their style is critical to producing and sustaining the proactive, innovative culture of the organization. To promote its future orientation, risks must be welcomed as opportunities for further growth and development. This requires leaders who are able to develop an atmosphere of trust and mutual support with their followers so that potential problems can be identified before they become crises. Reciprocal loyalty and mutual respect are the hallmarks of the leadership climate created by leaders in PROACTIVE organizations.

META-STRATEGIES FOR PROGRAMMING THE HIGH PERFORMING ORGANIZATION

The more progressive perspective afforded by the PROACTIVE frame of reference is nevertheless still insufficient to generate the level of performance that is observable in HIGH PERFORMING organizations. The phenomenon of corporate excellence is characterized by a high level of energy that unleashes human spirit and results in a marked improvement in productivity.

To generate these highest levels of performance, leaders need to operate from an enhanced frame of reference that provides a context which sustains and enhances the PROACTIVE level of performance and which ALSO shapes the cultural conditions inside the organization that breed the high spirit seen in HIGH PERFORMING systems.

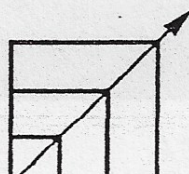


Our observations of HIGH PERFORMING organizations have led us to many of the same conclusions reached by others who have written in this area. In his description of high performing systems, Vaill (1982) points out that the energy level in such organizations is so high that the activities of the organization often seem frenetic and confusing to the outside observer. Yet these same activities, to the members of the HIGH PERFORMING organization, seem quite natural and not at all incoherent.

The leaders of HIGH PERFORMING organizations may not all have the same way of eliciting high performance from their people. But, in common, they all seem to have found a way to manage the flow of energy in their team or organization. They "see" energy patterns and the human spirit these energy patterns release, and they attend to these indicators with a dedication that equals and usually exceeds their dedication to the more ordinary indicators of performance such as the bottom line.

Although not all leaders of HIGH PERFORMING organizations use the same words to describe how they elicit the spirit and unleash the energy of their people, those who become acquainted with our work invariably report that the HFP model helps them make sense of and think coherently about that which they already do from an intuitive grasp of "what's right." And invariably they are immediately interested in understanding themselves and the possible reasons for their success. This fact -- their immediate interest in their own potential as leaders -- has provided us with a major clue about what makes high performing leaders AND high performing organizations tick. They have an almost insatiable curiosity about their own potentials and actively seek out those challenges that they believe will activate these potentials.

Figure 7. shows the elements that we believe comprise the enhanced frame of reference required for high performance. As noted, the frame of reference in HIGH PERFORMING organizations must be oriented on scanning for potentials, ...for what might be possible. It is from this understanding of the organization's potential that choices are made about the organization's mission and purpose.



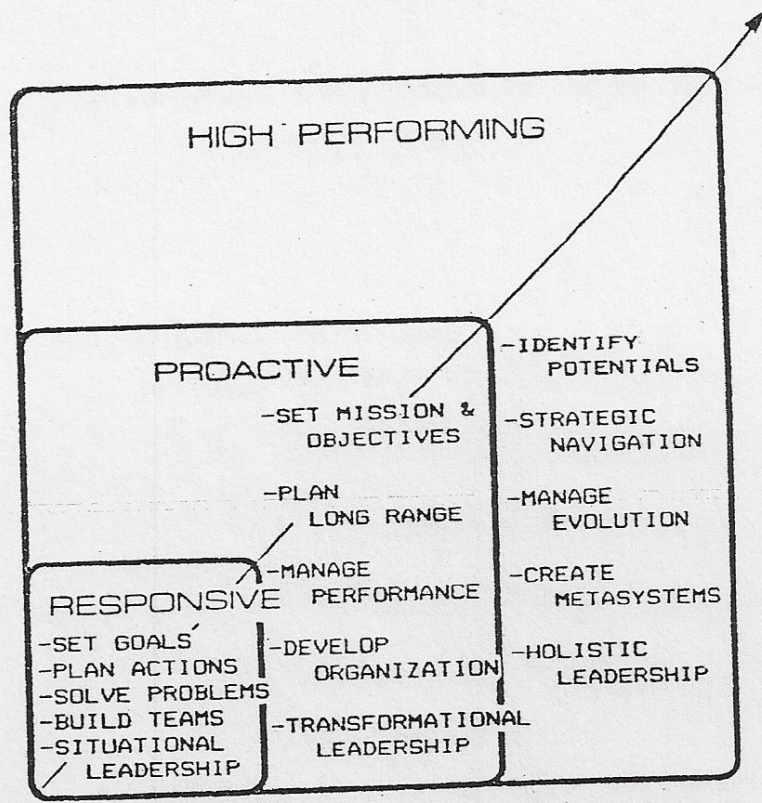
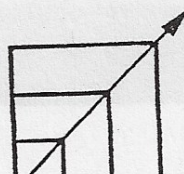


Figure 7. The High Performing Frame of Reference.

The HIGH PERFORMING organization's choices about strategy are made in the context of an underlying philosophy and folklore that gives meaning to the organization's long range plans. The task becomes one of strategically navigating the organization along a glidepath established in the long range plans. Likewise, the performance management system, required for a PROACTIVE organization, finds extra meaning in a HIGH PERFORMING organization because it includes designing the plans for the organization's evolution within which its actual performance can be more effectively monitored.

Another key feature of the HIGH PERFORMING frame of reference is the emphasis on developing metasegments as well as formal



systems. Metasystems, such as Quality Circles, Executive Boards and Excellence Networks, serve in HIGH PERFORMING organizations to shape the cultural milieu throughout the organization's formal structure.

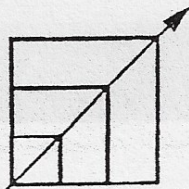
The kind of leadership required to achieve and sustain organizational high performance is what we suggest be called "Holistic" because of the HIGH PERFORMING leader's appreciation of the larger role played by her or his organization as an instrument of change in adjacent and higher systems in the environment. They look not only down into their own organization to help develop its potential and that of its people, but to the outside as well. They see their own organization as a contributing actor in the general drama of human development, and they use their organization to make contributions to the human communities in which the organization resides and to the cultures across which it spans.

THE RESULTING HIGH PERFORMANCE CULTURE

Figure 8. shows the shifts that occur in the same eleven dimensions used previously in describing these nested frames.

In HIGH PERFORMING systems, the focus is on achieving high standards of excellence through identifying new potentials, seeking out new avenues of opportunity, and activating the human spirit. To do this, leaders must have a frame of reference that extends beyond identifying the results to be achieved. They must look for ways of achieving the rich potentials awaiting in the future yet to be created. This enhanced frame of reference expands the operative time frame to one that bridges and flows across time.

Leaders operating in this state of "flow" are able to sustain for themselves (and communicate to their people) an appreciation of the rich legacies, proud traditions and positive legends that are the valued roots of the organization's past,...AND sustain and communicate an in-depth knowledge of the present state,...AND sustain and communicate a high-resolution vision of the future they want to create.



This extended time sense allows management to plan a smooth, continuing evolution of the organization toward an even more promising future. Change in the organization is not viewed as a threat to the survival of the status quo but as a natural process that allows new dreams and offers new opportunities.

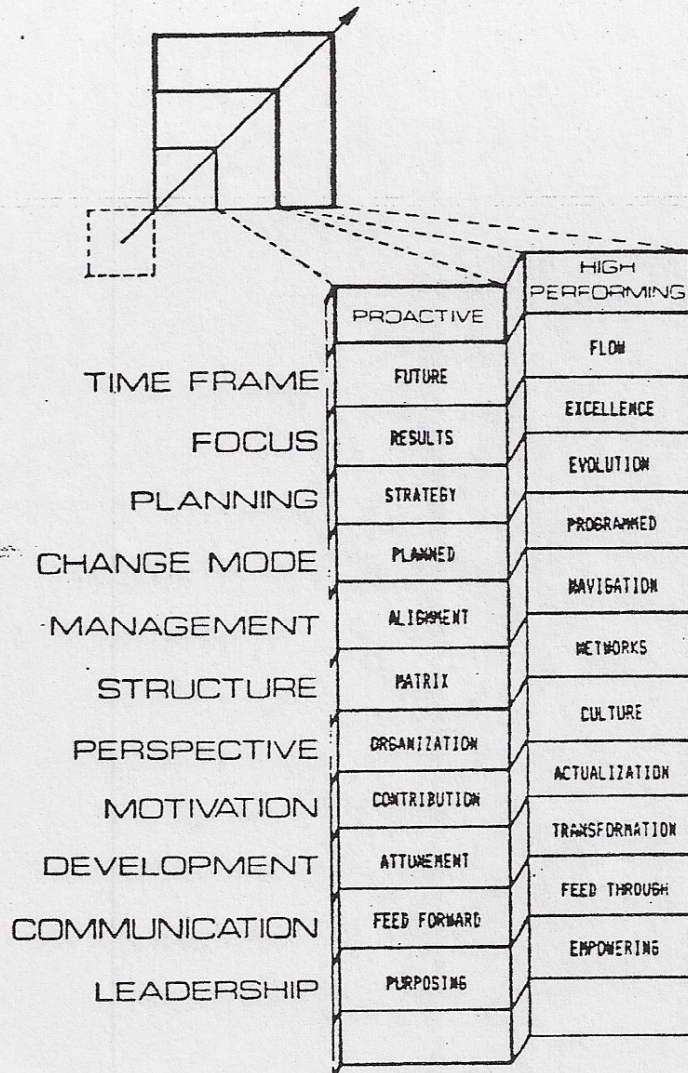
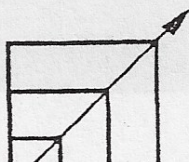


Figure 8. The Culture of the High Performing Organization.

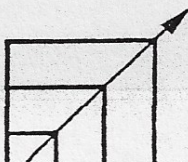


The planning process in a HIGH PERFORMING organization is a tool for conscious evolution rather than something done once a year on a crash basis to get something down on paper. And, the change mode is "programmed," meaning the requisite conditions for high energy, creativity, and innovation are consciously built into the organization's operating values and cultural norms.

The focus of management in HIGH PERFORMING organizations is on the strategic navigation of the total organization. The breakthroughs announced daily in the new world of electronic communication now permit forms of human structures to be designed as key tools for the long term navigation of complex organizations. Networks which are focused on the pursuit of high performance and human excellence can be electrified by linking network members together with a common electronic mail and computer conferencing system. When these internal "excellence networks" also include senior executives and other leaders in the organization, the ideas for action generated by the network have a direct connection into the decisionmaking mechanisms that exist at multiple levels in the organization.

Metasystems such as networks already exist in all organizations. Sometimes we call them "old boy nets", "interest groups", "constituencies" and "infrastructures." HIGH PERFORMING leaders, particularly those with high levels of responsibility, are beginning to realize that the advantages of Quality Circles can be amplified, ...that the principles of design and operation that enable Quality Circles to serve an organization's purpose can be implemented on a much larger scale. Interest groups, constituencies, infrastructures and other metasystems can be developed and linked by computer to form a distributed think tank for new ideas, for keeping members informed of breakthroughs in their fields of specialization, for scanning for trends and future opportunities in the organization's field of operation, and for functioning in an advisory capacity to decisionmaking boards.

As suggested so vividly by Marilyn Ferguson (1980), while bureaucracies are always much less than the sum of their parts, the synergistic effects activated by the rich information flow natural to networks makes them many times more efficient than the formal human structures through which they weave.

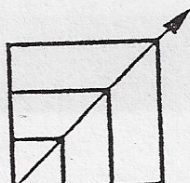


The perspective of leaders operating in the HIGH PERFORMING frame of reference includes the culture of the organization. As well as developing strong cohesive teams and integrated organizations, HIGH PERFORMING leaders look for ways of consciously strengthening their organization by building a strong corporate culture. They understand the uses of ceremony and ritual in creating and perpetuating the positive folklore, legends and myths that give each member of the organization a strong and proud heritage to maintain and reinforce. This attentiveness to the culture of the organization enables the leaders to act in ways that fortify the efforts of individuals to pursue their own actualization within the organization rather than seeking individual fulfillment only in outside activities.

The focus of development in the HIGH PERFORMING frame of reference is on continuing transformation and renewal. This is accomplished through communication which links the positive heritage of the organization with its potential for excellence in the future.

Not only do leaders in HIGH PERFORMING organizations have the unique ability to think far into the future and keep their organization aligned around a great vision, they have the parallel ability and courage to turn their people loose to pursue it.

These leaders lead through their ability and willingness to empower their followers,....to push power down into the hands of people so that they have the energy and freedom to seek adventure, creativity and innovation. Most importantly, they lead by virtue of caring deeply for their followers, which produces the mutual bond of strong emotional commitment and reciprocal loyalty that are the wellsprings of spirited performance.



SUMMARY

The High Performance Programming model provides a coherent framework for understanding the different levels of functional effectiveness that organizations can attain -- and the cultural frames of reference associated with each of these levels.

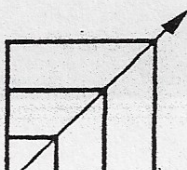
At the REACTIVE level, organizations are caught in frenetic rounds of activity as their leaders think mainly about survival, the enforcement of old rules and norms, and the protection of old structures.

At the RESPONSIVE level, organizations handle their requirements competently as their leaders think mainly about building cohesive teams and solving problems as they arise.

At the PROACTIVE level, organizations are oriented on the achievement of long term outcomes and their leaders think mainly about developing aligned and attuned systems which are focused on a positive and purposeful future.

At the HIGH PERFORMING level, organizations are flowing with excitement and spirit as their leaders think mainly about the further empowerment of their people so that together they can make even more significant contributions to the larger human communities and cultures they ultimately serve.

A central concept in this model is that the three higher states of effectiveness are nested. That is, a PROACTIVE organization must continue to be RESPONSIVE as well, and a HIGH PERFORMING organization must also be PROACTIVE -- and -- RESPONSIVE. The frames of reference associated with these states are similarly nested. Leaders must not become so fixated on achieving a future state that they neglect to attend to the needs of the present, nor should they unleash their people completely without first making certain they are aligned and pointed.



Given that we are already well into a new age of rapid change and transformation, higher order models such as this one are vital. Organizations that approach the challenges ahead with impoverished ways of thinking will be caught at the sheer line of conflicting paradigms. They can anticipate increasing difficulties as the pace of change continues to accelerate and as their habits of thought fall further and further behind the realities of an increasingly complex world.

Actually, we find that the overall picture is quite bright. We see a new generation of leaders emerging during this new age of transformation. With their enhanced cognitive models of what must be done to achieve excellence in human systems, these leaders have the capacity to shape the manner in which their organizations deal with the turbulent times. They and their organizations are at the threshold of great opportunity, for these new leaders also possess the quality of spirit themselves that they know to be the true source of excellence and high performance in all human activity. They have the capacity to infect others with this high spirit and high purpose, and in doing so, release the high levels of human energy required for extraordinary human achievement.

