CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION: THE POWER OF REFRAMING

CHAPTER SYNOPSIS

In Chapter 1, the authors introduce the concepts of reframing (viewing situations from multiple perspectives) and frames (cognitive lenses on the world that affect what you see and what it means). They propose four basic lenses or frames for strengthening managerial diagnosis and action: a structural frame, a human resource frame, a political frame, and a symbolic frame. (The four frames are summarized in Table 3.1.1.)

The authors assert that managers and leaders often bring too few ideas and too many habitual responses to organizational problems and challenges. They rely on a limited cognitive perspective to make sense out of the world and remain blind to other options. They delude themselves in thinking theirs is “the only way” to handle a particular problem. Such thinking hinders managerial effectiveness and abilities to understand and respond to the complexities of life in today's turbulent world.

Successful managers and leaders require more comprehensive perspectives. They need multiple lenses and skills in reframing—looking at old problems in a new light, as well as confronting new challenges with different tools and reactions. Reframing expands understandings, responses, timing, and styles that managers apply to problems. It helps them translate managerial good intentions into effective action.

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

At the end of the chapter, students will be able to:

1. Explain why people tend to view the world from a single perspective and why viewing any situation in this way leads to a limited—and perhaps fatally flawed—understanding of the situation.

2. Describe the concept of reframing, or viewing situations in a number of different ways, and the benefits of reframing.

3. Discuss the broad outlines of four powerful frames for viewing organizations: the structural, human resource, political, and symbolic frames.

ISSUES FOR REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

1. Ultimately, what do Bolman & Deal see at the primary the reason Bob Nardelli failed as CEO of Home Depot?
Bob Nardelli failed as CEO for Home Depot because he was only able to see part of the picture of what he was facing. Successful leaders have the ability to see the whole picture from multiple frames. In the case study, the CEO of Home Depot, Bob Nardelli, had an incomplete picture of the operation that negatively impacted Home Depot’s results. He possessed that incomplete or distorted picture because he overlooked or misinterpreted important signals. Implementing a command and control structure, he focused only on operational efficiency at Home Depot and he neglected the aspects of customer care that made Home Depot successful. Through his actions, he fundamentally changed Home Depot’s culture, which led to a decline in employee morale and customer service. This course of action severely damaged his relationship with investors and the board of directors of Home Depot.

2. What is a frame and what does it allow a manager to accomplish?

It is a set of ideas and assumptions that help a manager understand and negotiate a particular “territory.” It permits a manager to register and assemble key bits of perceptual data into a coherent picture of what is happening. It allows a manager to know what she is up against and ultimately, what she can do about it.

3. What is “reframing” and why is it an important skill for managers?

Reframing is the ability to break frames – the ability to move from utilizing one frame to utilizing another frame to make sense of the situation a manager faces. Having the ability to employ multiple frames allows a manager to create a more meaningful understanding of the multitude of different situations she faces. Reframing encourages a manager to use more than one frame to make sense of the situation. Every frame has strengths and limitations, and thus, each frame is more or less valuable for making sense of a particular situation.

4. Describe the cognitive process called anchoring?

Anchoring is a cognitive process that occurs when a decision maker locks into a particular answer to a problem or understanding of a situation in spite of the fact that some of the facts of the situation do not fit decision maker’s answer or understanding of the situation.
CHAPTER 2: SIMPLE IDEAS, COMPLEX ORGANIZATIONS

CHAPTER SYNOPSIS

In Chapter 2, the authors explore how properties of human nature and of modern organizations interact to create problems and pressures in everyday managerial life. Characteristics of human thinking and perception contribute to these difficulties in several ways. The authors discuss three commonsense “theories,” or limited mental models, that people often use to interpret organizational life: blame individuals, blame the bureaucracy, and attribute problems to a thirst for power. Each is based on a partial truth, but all are incomplete and misleading.

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

At the end of the chapter, students will be able to;

1. Describe three types of oversimplified concepts often used to explain problems in organizations, and explain why people tend to use such explanations.

2. Discuss four characteristics of organizations that make oversimplified explanations ineffective in explaining them.

3. Explain the concept of organizational learning with reference to the works of Senge, Oshry, and Argyris and Schön.

4. Discuss the role of mental maps in dealing with organizational ambiguity and complexity.

ISSUES FOR REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

1. In the example in the text, the two U.S. F-15C pilots patrolling the no-fly zone in post Gulf War Northern Iraq, who shot down the two American Blackhawk helicopters, were described as doing “the normal human thing in the face of ambiguous perceptual data.” What was that “normal human thing”?

“They filled in gaps based on what they knew, what they expected, and what they wanted to see.” The lead pilot thought he had spotted two “Hinds” – Soviet-made helicopters used by the Iraqis. But in reality they were two American UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters. Once the pilot saw the helicopters, he “believed” he was seeing enemy helicopters. He then “selectively matched up
incoming scraps of visual data with a reasonable cognitive scheme of an enemy silhouette (Snook, 2000, p. 80)."

2. According to Bolman and Deal, what are the two advantages of well-grounded, deeply ingrained, personal theories?

They tell us what is important in a situation and what can be safely ignored and they group scattered bits of information into manageable patterns.

3. What are three of the major sources of ambiguity in organizations identified by Bolman and Deal?

The sources are: available information is incomplete or vague; different people interpret information in different ways depending on mindsets and organizational doctrines; sometimes it is intentionally generated as a smoke screen to conceal problems or steer clear of conflict, much of the time; events and processes are so intricate, scattered, and uncoordinated that no one can fully understand the real truth; we are not sure what the problem is; we are not sure what is really happening; we are not sure what we want; we do not have the resources we need; we are not sure who is supposed to do that; we are not sure how to get what we want; we are not sure how to determine if we have succeeded.

4. Explain what Bolman and Deal mean when they state “what we expect determines what we get?” Use the examples in the text to explain.

Not only do our frames (i.e., mental maps) influence how we interpret our world, they influence how our experiences unfold. In support of this, Bolman and Deal use the example of the placebo effect and school teachers who were told that random students were “spurters”. The student’s academic performance actually did “spurt.” Thus, the patients’ and teachers’ beliefs became reality, not because they were true but simply because they believed.
CHAPTER 3: GETTING ORGANIZED

CHAPTER SYNOPSIS

In Chapter 3, the authors explore the origins, focus, and content of the structural frame. Finding the right structure is a central concern of any organization. Structure is more than lines and boxes on an organizational chart: it is a rational arrangement of roles and relationships that depicts desired patterns of activities, expectations, and exchanges among employees and with external constituents like customers or clients. Structure is not synonymous with bureaucracy, red tape, or rigidity. It is a set of arrangements intended to accommodate an organization’s needs for standardization, efficiency, clarity, and predictability given its goals and environment. Questions to guide managers in structural design concern such matters as criteria for dividing up work and methods for vertical and lateral coordination.

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

At the end of the chapter, students will be able to;

1. Identify the core assumptions of the structural perspective and summarize its history.

2. Explain how structure affects function in organizations.

3. Describe the two basic tensions of organizational design: how to divide up the work (differentiation) and how to coordinate multiple efforts (integration).

4. Discuss various design options that organizations use to divide up work and coordinate multiple efforts.

5. Explain why certain structural imperatives, such as an organization’s size, age, and work force, affect the organization’s design.

ISSUES FOR REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

1. What is a core premise of the structural lens?

   Clear well understood goals, roles, relationships and adequate coordination are essential to organizational performance. The right structure forms a solid underpinning to combat the risk that individuals will become confused, ineffective, apathetic or hostile.
2. What are the “structural imperatives” identified by Bolman and Deal? In other words, what is the universal set of internal and external parameters that organizations need to respond to when choosing its structure?

Size and age, core process, environment, strategy and goals, information technology, and the nature of the workforce. These are the dimensions of an organization’s operational context that should be considered when choosing an organization’s structure.

3. How does structure influence what happens in the workplace?

It provides a blueprint for officially sanctioned expectations and exchanges among internal players and external constituencies. Thus, it enhances and constrains what an organization can accomplish.
CHAPTER 4: STRUCTURE AND RESTRUCTURING

CHAPTER SYNOPSIS

In Chapter 4, the authors explore eight basic structural tensions that organizations face when searching for an appropriate structure.

To balance these opposing tensions, organizations evolve a variety of structural configurations. Mintzberg discusses five possibilities: machine bureaucracy, professional bureaucracy, divisionalized form, simple structure, and adhocracy. Helgesen adds an additional image: the “web of inclusion”—an organizational form that is more circular than hierarchical. Each structural configuration has strengths and limitations, which makes good diagnostic skills essential for managers and leaders who need arrangements that fit the requirements of their own situation.

Chapter 4 also discusses how and when to restructure, including the processes that lead to successful structural change. The authors explore generic principles that guide restructuring across a range of circumstances as well as specific restructuring needs inherent in different structural configurations. They identify pressures that lead to restructuring and conclude the chapter with several case examples of restructuring success: Citibank, Kodak, and Beth Israel Hospital.

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

At the end of the chapter, students will be able to;

1. Discuss the structural dilemmas inherent in choosing an appropriate organizational form.

2. Describe Mintzberg’s five structural configurations and Helgeson’s web of inclusion.

3. Discuss issues in restructuring with reference to Mintzberg’s organizational forms.

4. Identify several common reasons why organizations restructure, and discuss the risks and benefits of restructuring.

ISSUES FOR REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

1. What do Bolman and Deal mean when they state, “when responsibilities are overdefined, people conform to prescribed roles and protocols in “bureapathic’ ways?”
They mean that employees rigidly follow job descriptions regardless of how much the service or product suffers.

2. What was the authors’ purpose in utilizing the example of managed health care in which medical decisions are reviewed by insurance companies, giving clerks far removed from the patient’s bedside the authority to approve or deny treatment?

It is an example an organizational structure that is too tight. Tight structures stifle flexibility and cause people to spend much of their time trying to beat the system. In this example, the result is that many physicians lament spending more time talking on the phone with insurance representatives than seeing patients, and as a result of the tight controls, insurance providers sometimes deny treatments that physicians see as urgent.

3. Briefly explain Mintzberg’s conceptualization of structural possibilities and the model’s major contribution the field of organizational theory.

Mintzberg’s model have five components: operating core, administrative component, strategic apex, technostructure, and support staff. It is a broad description of the structural terrain of organizations. It clusters various functions of organizations into grouping and showing their relative size and clout in response to different missions and external challenge. It is composed of five basic structural configurations: simple structure, machine bureaucracy, professional bureaucracy, divisionalized form and adhocracy.