

Is Everyone in the Organization Singing From the Same Sheet of Music?

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Educational Institutions are complex entities. Effective leadership calls for a compelling vision and a strategy for the successful achievement of that vision.

Successful strategies usually include strategic plans which translate the vision and the mission of the institution into long range goals and short term actions plans. Their ultimate purpose is threefold: first, to structure the entire organization to achieve that strategy; second, to ensure that internal processes are focused on customer needs; and finally, to focus the individual efforts of all the people within the organization on supporting the achievement of the vision.

The larger the organization, the more difficult this job of people focus becomes. The best laid plans of mice and men are doomed to failure if everyone within the organization is not focused on doing their part to ensure the successful implementation of those plans.

The question then becomes: "How can we easily measure if the daily behaviors of our faculty and staff are aligned with our strategies?"

The Answer is D.I.A.L.O.G.

Diagnostic Data

Indicating the
ALignment of
Organizational
Goals

The D.I.A.L.O.G. Organization Evaluation Instrument provides the leadership of an institution of higher education with hard data (both quantitative and qualitative) as to where there are disconnects affecting results. The source of these data is the people at all levels within the organization and their perceptions.

The data reported in summary form provide a tool for identifying specific issues that may need to be addressed in addition to areas of strength which can be capitalized on to benefit the organization.



The Foundation for this instrument is the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award. The seven Baldrige categories provide a framework that has been proven effective time and time again. One just has to look at the results generated by Baldrige winners.



Baldrige categories: The seven Baldrige categories that correspond to the areas measured by the D.I.A.L.O.G. instrument for educational institutions are:

1. Leadership
2. Strategic Planning
3. Students, Stakeholders, and Market Focus
4. Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management
5. Faculty and Staff Focus
6. Process Management
7. Results

How is the instrument structured?

The instrument consists of 70 statements (approximately 10 in each category).

The respondent indicates the degree to which he or she agrees or disagrees with the statement, or checks the response: "I don't know."

In addition, the respondent indicates his or her stratification within the organization.

The respondent fills out an online questionnaire. The data is tabulated and a report is prepared for presentation to the organization.

How is the summary report structured?

The data for the entire organization is presented in color graphs and text form and reflect how well the organization is aligned with the Baldrige criteria.

The data is then delineated according to the levels selected by the institution. Data showing how each of the levels compare to the others is presented in color graph form for each of the categories.

Likewise, the data by department is presented in the same fashion.

What to do with the data?

The D.I.A.L.O.G. data helps leaders of educational institutions to identify which categories need to be addressed. It helps them to measure “what they know and what they do not know” about the professional development needs of the people within their organization. Organizational resources are too precious not to be focusing on what's important now.

If the organization's actual results are not meeting expectations, then D.I.A.L.O.G. is the tool of choice to identify the disconnects and what issues need to be addressed.

Who should consider using D.I.A.L.O.G.?

If any of these symptoms sound familiar, please give serious consideration to contacting us for assistance:

- Enrollment numbers are slipping
- Student retention to graduation is declining
- Employee turnover is high
- Students leave to go to another college
- Internal conflicts often get in the way
- You spend more time reacting to the competition
- Day to day crisis management prevails
- Interdepartmental communications are poor

Or, the best reason of all:

You just want to improve!

About the Author –

Dr. Paul N. Smith is the President of Blue Fox Solutions, Inc. which provides leadership development consulting with an emphasis on partnering with educational institutions to help them achieve the improved results that they desire.

Blue Fox Solutions provides professional leadership development programs in such areas as:

- Strategic Planning,
- Executive Leadership Development,
- Management & Supervisory Development,
- Task Force & Team Facilitator Training,
- Marketing and Recruiting Development,
- Faculty Development,
- Student and Employee Satisfaction Measurement, and
- Customer Service Training.

Clients include a range of educational institutions in both the non-profit and for-profit market sectors.

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