

Learning organization



Learning organization



- Peter Senge's 1990 book *The Fifth Discipline* provided many of us with the concept of the learning organization





Through learning, we:

- Re-create ourselves
- Become able to do things we never were able to do before
- Re-perceive the world and our relationship to it
- Extend our capacity to create, to be part of the generative process of life





Learning Organization

Chronologically:

“Organizational learning is a process of detecting and correcting error.” Chris Argyris, 1977.





Learning Organization

“Organizational learning means the process of improving actions through better knowledge and understanding.”
C. Marlene Fiol & Margorie A. Lyles,
1985.





Learning Organization

“Organizations are seen as learning by encoding inferences from history into routines that guide behavior.” Barbara Levitt & James G. March, 1988.





Learning Organization

“Organizational learning occurs through shared insights, knowledge and mental models . . . [and] builds on past knowledge and experience—that is, on memory.” Ray Stata, 1989.



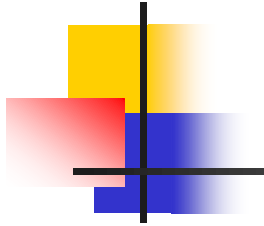


Learning Organization

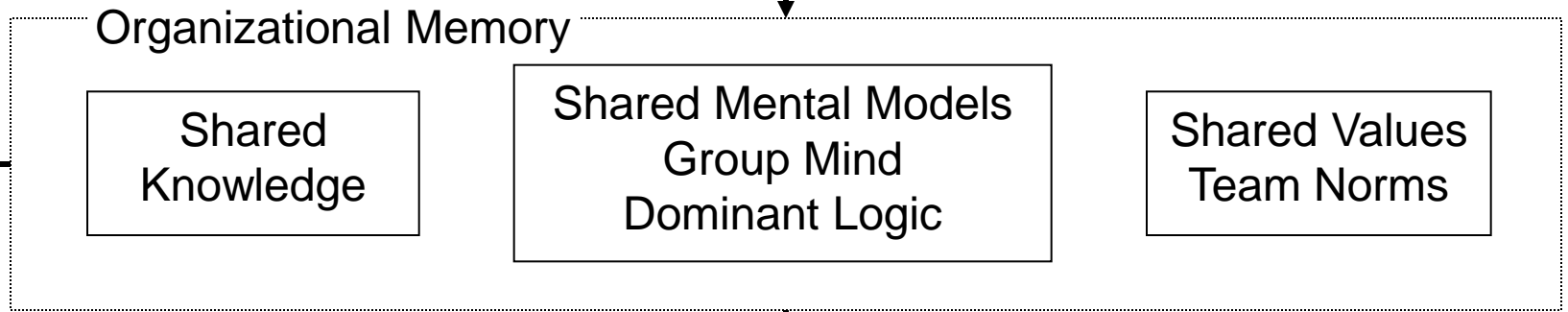
“An entity learns if, through its processing of information, the range of its potential behaviors is changed.”
George P. Huber, 1991.



A Model of Organization Learning



Organizational Learning
•Single / Double Loop Learning



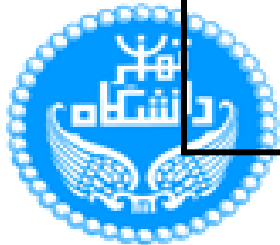
Shared Knowledge

Shared Mental Models
Group Mind
Dominant Logic

Shared Values
Team Norms

Group Habits
Performance Strategies
Group Creativity

Task Performance





Learning Organization

A: In the absence of learning,

- companies—and individuals—simply repeat old practices.
- change remains cosmetic, and improvements are either fortuitous or short-lived.





Learning Organization

Learning Organization Skills

- Systematic Problem-solving
- Experimentation (new approaches)
- Learning from past experience
- Learning from best practices (of others)
- Knowledge transference





Organizational Learning

- “Organizational learning is a process of detecting and correcting error.” Chris Argyris.
- Error is the mismatch between what we intend an action to produce and what happens as a result of our action.
- Action is the means by which we give meaning to life.
- Single and double loop learning



Learning Organization Definition: Peter Senge

- From The Fifth Discipline, 1990:
“...organizations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together.”



Learning Organization Definition:

David Garvin

- From Learning in Action, 2000: “A learning organization is an organization skilled at creating, acquiring, interpreting, transferring, and retaining knowledge, and at purposely modifying its behavior to reflect new knowledge and insights.”





Senge's Model

- Systems Thinking
- Personal Mastery
- Mental Models
- Shared Vision
- Team Learning





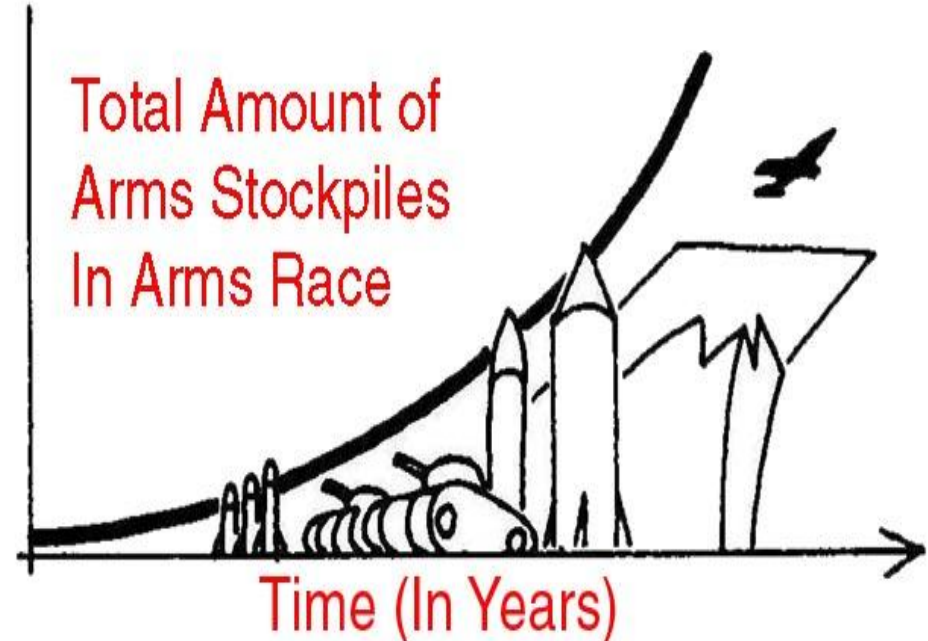
1. Systems Thinking

- A framework for understanding the structures, patterns, and relationships that mold organizational behavior
- A discipline for seeing wholes
- Permits identification of ways to change
- Acknowledges the power of internal processes (not individuals, not outside forces) in shaping work



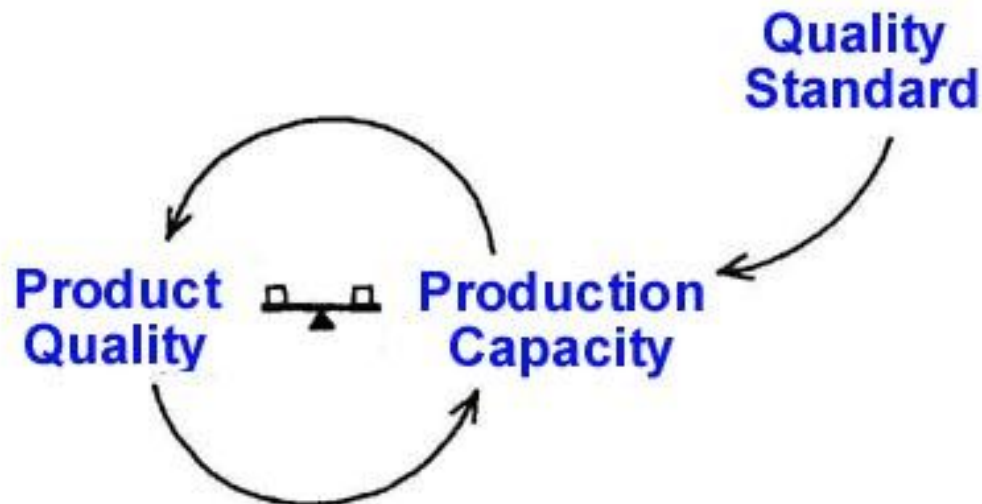
Reinforcing feedback

- The engine of growth and decline.
 - Small changes amplify causing accelerated growth or decline.



Balancing Feedback

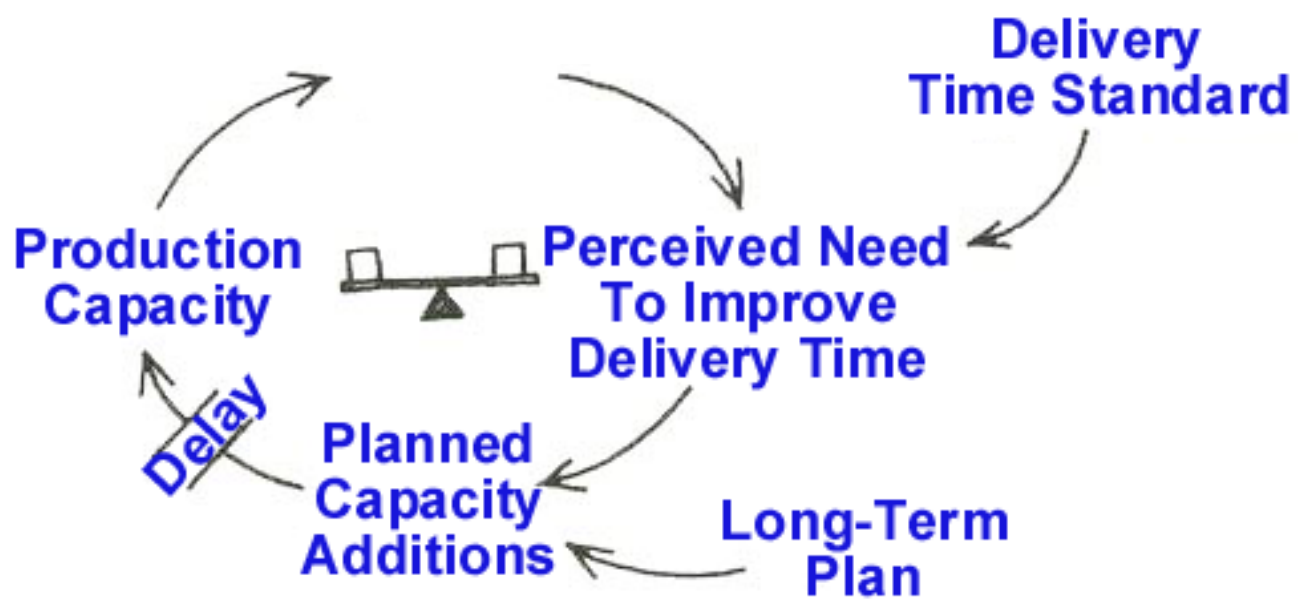
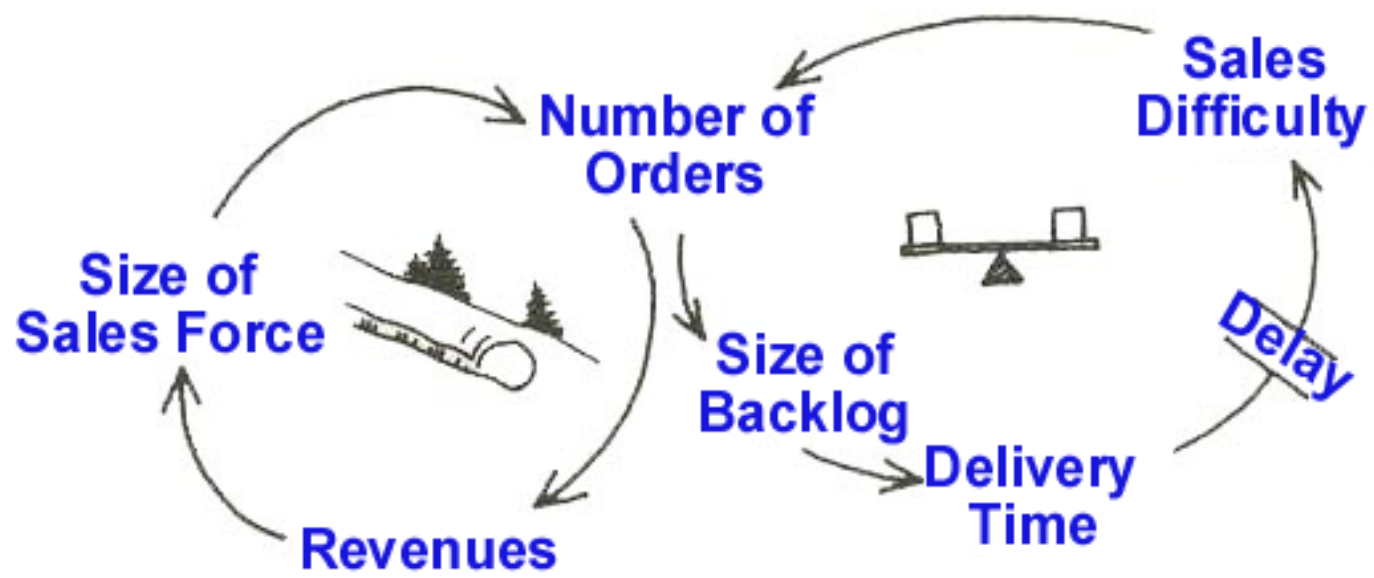
- Goal-oriented behavior
- Limits growth or decline
- Resistance to change is a balancing process



Delays

- Effects on variables takes time.
- Consequences of actions occur gradually







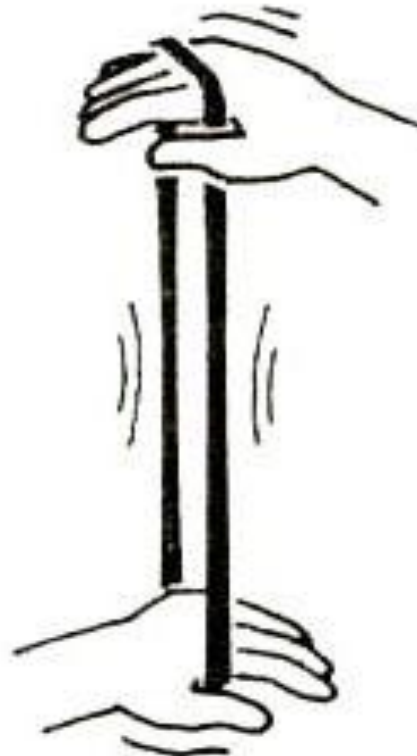
2. Personal Mastery

- Commitment, with proficiency, by the individual to own lifelong learning
- A discipline in which the individual constantly clarifies what is important and sees reality clearly
- Grounded in competence and skills
- Generates a sense of purpose, power, self-worth, and a personal vision



Creative Tension

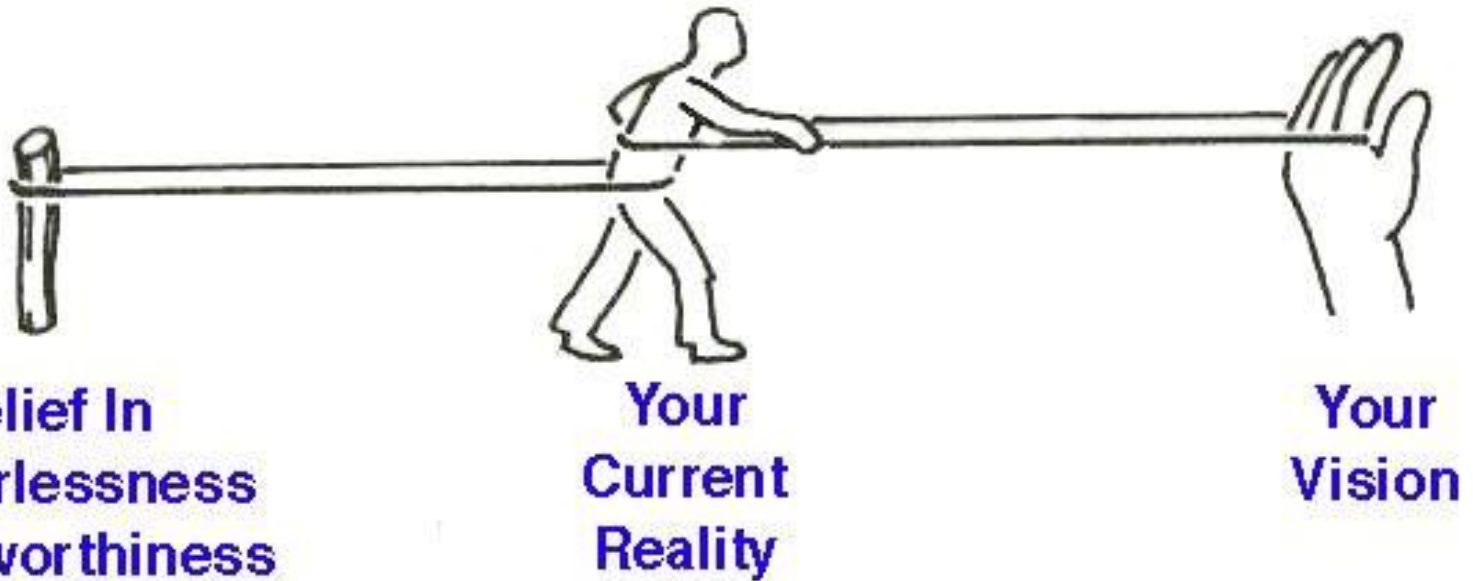
Vision



Current
Reality



Structural Conflict





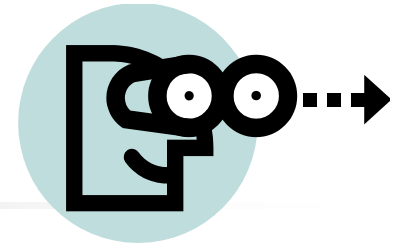
3. Mental Models

- Deeply held internal images of how the world works
- A discipline for shaping these personal pictures of the world and understanding how they affect individual action
- Can be consciously examined and shaped





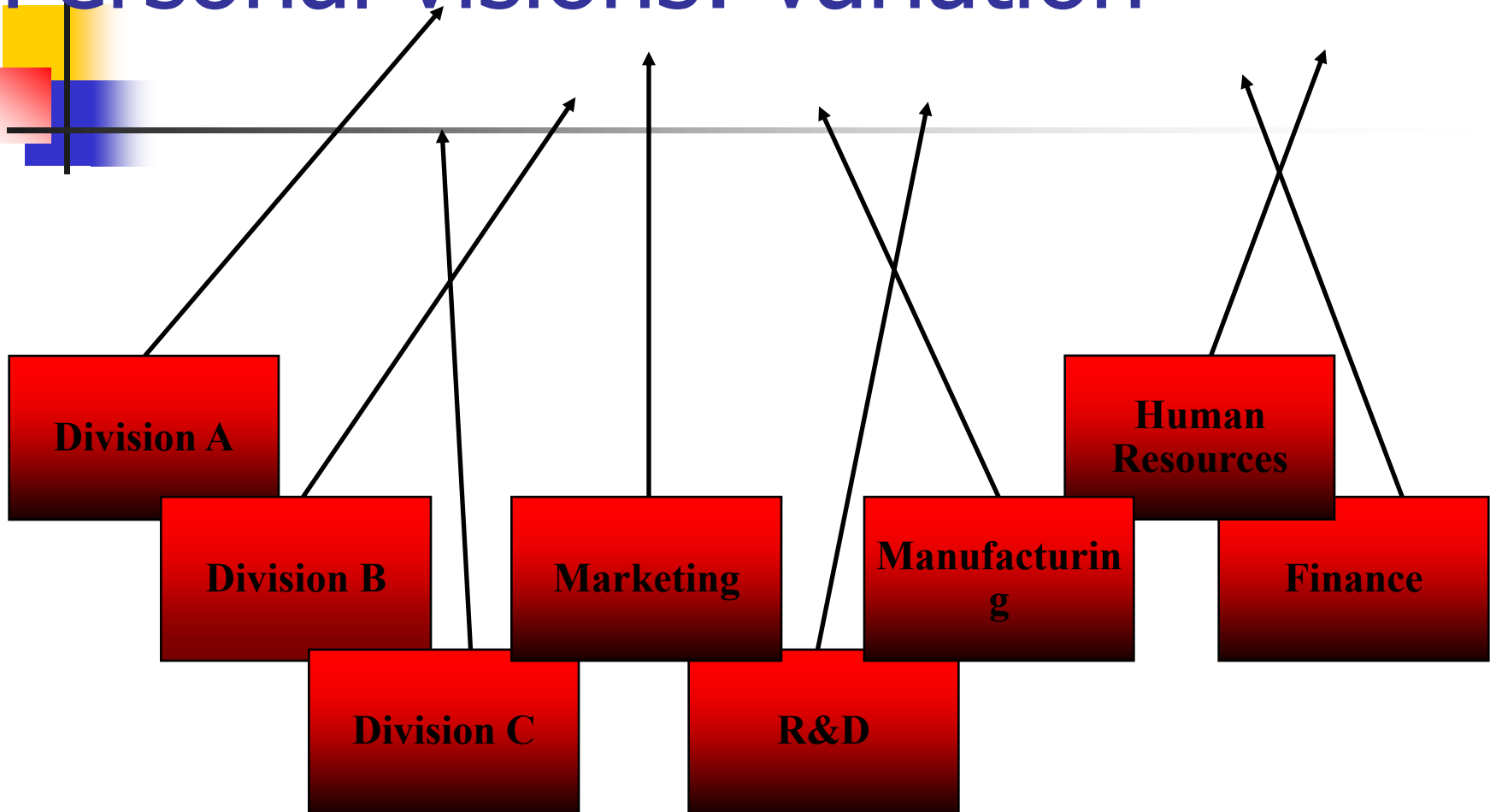
4. Shared Vision



- Ability to maintain a collective picture of a future that is sought
- Reflects a desire to be connected and becomes part of pursuing a larger purpose that is embodied in the organization's services
- Commitment is by choice, not compliance
- Scenario planning: tool to build shared vision



Personal visions: variation



Shared Vision: fully aligned



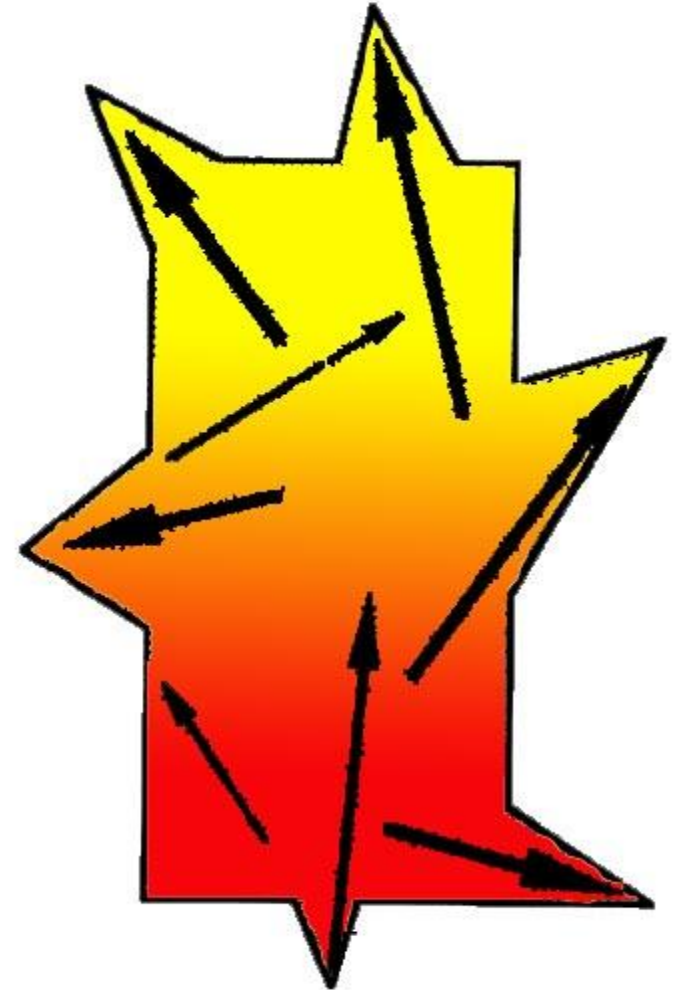
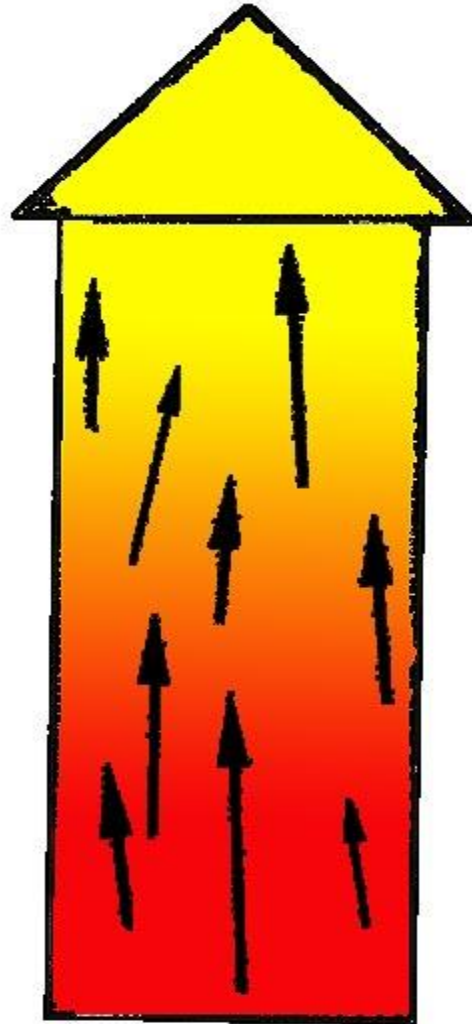
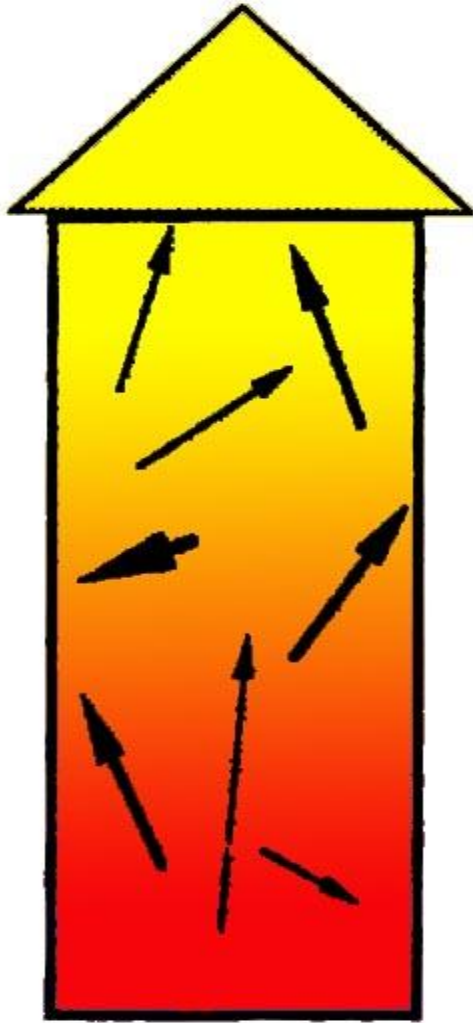


5. Team Learning

- Begins with skilled discussion, dialogue
- Skilled discussion: conversation guided by a repertoire of techniques that help members fit together the pieces of their situation
- Dialogue: the free, creative expression and exploration of ideas
- A group discipline leading to alignment of members' thoughts and achievement of desired results



Alignment Diagrams



The Laws of the Fifth Discipline

Today's problems come from yesterday's "solutions"

- The harder you push, the harder the system pushes back
- Behavior grows better before it grows worse
- The easy way out usually leads back in
- The cure can be worse than the disease
- Faster is slower
- Cause & effect are not closely related in time and space
- Small changes can produce big results – but the areas of highest leverage are often the least obvious
- You can have your cake and eat it too – but not at once
- Dividing an elephant in half does not produce two small elephants

There is no blame





The model overcomes:

- Linear thinking, reactive responses
- Controlling leadership
- Negative mental models
- Lack of vision
- Individual competition and product orientation





Challenges in the Process

- Commitment is to continuous change
 - Can undermine security, identity, self-esteem
- Compensation must be reconsidered
 - How to handle merit is a question
- Shared vision is still out of reach
 - Complexity makes this hard, still look to the director

