ARE YOU BALANCING 'BUILT BY THE ORGANIZATION' AND 'ORGANIZATION BUILDING'?

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To being with, **Built by the Organization**, means producing our products or services which a customer/consumer pays for. And **Organization Building**, means creating the Structure, Staffing, Systems, Processes and Dynamics of the organization that creates the product or service.

Before we dive right in, let me set a context first on Organization Building with a few warm-up questions and my best-informed attempt at some answers. Neither these questions nor the answers are comprehensive. They are just an attempt to establish what happens when organization building is missing. So here I go, stay with me to the end...

WHAT IS THE COST OF ALL THE DELAYS IN THE ORGANIZATION?

I am no finance wizard but can apply some mathematical logic to begin answering the question. If the cost of doing something in X days is Y, what is the cost if the work gets done in 2X days or 3X days?

Answer, the cost is double or triple, by a linear logic. It could get worse if the execution time period is longer than a few quarters or if there is regular input cost inflation. So, the same amount of work that could have gotten done in Y cost, got done in 2Y or 3Y cost in this case. **Reasons:** The work wasn't clear, the preparation wasn't there, someone came up with the idea spontaneously without planning, there was no one to do it, someone didn't make decisions, some people would not agree, some departments took way more time than visualized, customer needs changed... and possibly 100 other reasons we all hear every day.

Broadly, a lot of these are either a Strategy, Culture or Leadership element missing in the organization or Strategy, Culture or Leadership elements not being executed in a focused way to correct gaps or bad behaviours in the organization.

Remember all those times when we have complained to customer care, had an outburst on social media, found and complained to a so-called senior person or ran to a consumer or regulatory body about the misadventures or lack of responsibility of a company? Well, these are all organizations where this practical challenge exists.

So how much cost overruns are happening in your organization? Don't know?... You must. But more importantly, you must know that a lot of the missing links are because of the lack of Organization Building Measures. More on this after all the questions and answers.

WHAT IS THE ULTIMATE DAMAGE OF ALL THE NEVER STARTED, INCOMPLETE AND INCORRECTLY EXECUTED WORK IN AN ORGANIZATION?

Financial damage, for sure. Busyness and chaos in the organization, for sure. Disconnect between departments and people, for sure. Turf wars, for sure. Some of this even extends to regulatory and legal challenges. Ultimately even a survival challenge for many organizations.

Now recall the once well-known companies — which have gone down like this.

Yet again, the missing links are because of the lack of Organization Building Measures.

Are people coming to the workplace today with a serious resolve to get work done collectively? Or are people coming to get work done in a way that it does not come back to bite them in an appraisal or some other forum?

I don't have to even get started on this one. We all have witnessed the good, the bad, the ugly of this one. There are very few people who put the

organization first and their self-promotion second. And this creates massive performance challenges.

Yet again, the missing links are because of the lack of Organization Building Measures.

Let me stop here, and dive right into what then will help us with organization building, through these anchors:

- *Clear values articulation & practice by everyone*
- *Clear strategy articulation and cascade.* (For the 'let's keep strategy fluid' enthusiasts – if you don't know where you are going or if you keep changing your destination / goal post, you aren't getting anywhere.)
- *Effective organizational structure and hierarchy.* (For the 'flat organization enthusiasts', it works only if your organization is not growing in depth or breadth.)
- Role clarity and effective hiring
- Regular culture enhancement programs
- Effective performance management
- Effective leadership and managerial development
- Effective business reviews
- Effective continuous improvement and change programs

And this is just the mandatory list. There are so many other activities that need to be done to build an organization and they have to be done today, while the organization is busy building and delivering. Each of these will take several pages to describe in its appropriate avatar. However, one callout: all these organization building measures should be done scientifically and in an interconnected way. Often, they are done by organizations as some department's activity, and these programs are not even calibrated by departments with each other.

THIS IS THE POINT THAT YOU NEED TO REALIZE:

If you think keeping the organization running to produce things is more important than building the organization, it is soon going to prove as a grave mistake. A balance between the two is the only way to do it right.

Dave Brandon, ex-CEO of Dominos used to say: We either get better or we get worse. So, leaders and organizations need to realize that either we are consciously building the organization, and deliberately making it better, or we are consciously ignoring building the organization and letting it become worse.

Many organizations focus on just making money, and not building the capability to consistently make money. They forgo improving the effectiveness and efficiency. They don't realize they are losing money faster than they can replenish. Conventional accounting will tell us what's the cost of doing things. But we rarely ever do calculate the cost overruns and hidden costs that are causing revenue leakage! Do we?

Built by the Organization vs. *Organization building* was never a debate to be had. This was never a trade-off to be made. Both have to go hand in hand. There are periods, really short periods, when it is practical that one gets more attention than the other. This period can be a few months, not many quarters. Look at any non-performing company that was turned around – and you will see this kind of synchronous effort.

So now the question finally: *How well are you balancing 'Built by the Organization' and 'Organization Building'?*

From strategy, to structure, to people, to systems, to culture, nothing has a lifelong validity. In fact, in today's time, everything has to be renewed, repurposed and realigned—possibly every quarter. And this must be done, till the organizational maturity on all these areas gets into a self-sustaining and self-propelling mode. Lucky are those quarters where such intensity isn't required.

There is a need to balance many of the factors mentioned below and some others which are important to your organization. The spectrums need to be addressed one by one as a systematic – interconnected approach. An essential list of two-way balancing you must focus on:

Vision, Mission, Values	↔	Cultural Practices
Strategy	↔	Performance Management
Strategic Initiatives	↔	Program Management
Operating Objectives / Principles	↔	Operational Excellence
Sales Strategy	↔	Sales Management
Brand Proposition	↔	Service Delivery
Hiring	↔	Activating and Retaining Talent
Structures & Roles	↔	Enablement &Careers
Competitiveness	↔	Psychological Safety and Collaboration

So, if you are really focused as a business leader in balancing *'Built by the Organization' and 'Organization Building';* your first stop is doing an organizational audit to realize where the leverage points are that you need to balance. Then, create a coherent, purposeful approach to fixing these with a continuous focus.

My invitation: Don't just be a working organization, be an evolving organization.

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